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CHANUKAH SUPPLEMENT

TIKKUN

IMAGINE LAW

BY PETER GABEL

MIDEAST MADNESS

BY MICHAEL LERNER

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2000

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RELIGION IN POLITICS



ROUNDTABLE WITH:

STEPHEN CARTER • BARBARA EHRENREICH • STANLEY FISH
MICHAEL SANDEL • JUDITH SCHAEFFER • AND NOMI STOLZENBERG

HEALTH CRISIS

PREVENTING CANCER:
Samuel Epstein & Liza Gross

A PERSONAL STORY:
Juliana Rose

WHY YOUR VOTE MATTERS

Michael Tomasky

A WAR AGAINST BOYS?

Michael Kimmel

PLUS: Jo Ellen Green Kaiser on the Face of the New Left
Jack Newfield on Bobby Kennedy
Andrew Bachman on Philip Roth
Andrew Furman on Orthodoxy



The Displaced of Capital

"A shift in the structure of experience..."

As I pass down Broadway this misty late-winter morning,
the city is ever alluring, but thousands of miles to the south
the subsistence farms of guava, chickens, yams,
are bought by transnationals, burst into miles
of export tobacco and coffee; and now it seems the farmer
has left behind his ploughed-under village for an illegal
partitioned basement in the outer boroughs. Perhaps
he's the hand that emerged with your change
from behind the glossies at the corner kiosk,
the displaced of capital have come to the capital.

The displaced of capital have come to the capital,
but sunlight steams the lingerie-shops' windows, the coffee bar
has its door wedged open, and all I ask of the world
this morning is to pass down my avenue, find
a fresh-printed *Times* and a wrought iron table;
and because I'm here in New York the paper tells me of here:
of the Nicaraguans and the thousand needle trades, the ethnic
streetcorner job-markets where men wait all day but more likely the women
find work, in the new hotels or in the needle trades,
a shift in the structure of experience.

A shift in the structure of experience
told the farmer on his Andean plateau
"Your way of life is obsolescent."—But hasn't it always been so,
I inquire as my column spills from Page One
to MONEY&BUSINESS, but no, it says here the displaced
stream now to tarpaper *favelas*, planetary barracks
with steep rents for paperless migrants, so no one
remits any more to those obsolescent, starving
relatives on the *altiplano*, pushed to ever thinner air and soil;
unnoticed, the narrative has altered.

Unnoticed, the narrative has altered.
But though the city's thus indecipherably orchestrated
by the evil empire, down to the very molecules in my brain
as I think I'm thinking, can I escape morning happiness,
or not savor our fabled "texture" of foreign
& native poverties? (A smiling boy tied into greengrocer's apron,
unplaceable accent, brings out my coffee.) But, *no*, it says here
the old country's "de-developing" due to its mountainous
debt to the First World—that's Broadway, that's my cafe
and my table, so how can I today
warm myself at the sad heartening narrative of immigration?
Unnoticed, the narrative has altered.
The displaced of capital have come to the capital.

—Anne Winters

2 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

5 PUBLISHER'S NOTES: *Media Morality*

7 EDITORIALS: *Israel and Palestine—Murdering the Spirit of God; The Unity of All Being*



FEATURES:

19 ELECTION 2000

Whither the Left? **Jo Ellen Green Kaiser** argues that this summer's protesters are the *Face of the New Left*, concerned with responsibilities rather than with rights (19). Within the mainstream, **Michael Tomasky** explains *Why Your Vote Matters* when you vote for a Democratic stalwart like Al Gore (21).

23 COVER STORY: RELIGION IN POLITICS

From Joseph Lieberman to George W., this year's politicians have argued that religion should have a more prominent role in public life. But there are dangers to bringing God into the public sphere. Read our *Roundtable* discussion with **Stephen Carter**, **Barbara Ehrenreich**, **Stanley Fish**, **Michael Sandel**, **Judith Schaeffer**, and **Nomi Stolzenberg** (23). For an analysis of the growing acceptance of Judaism in American culture, turn next to **Andrew Furman's** *Is the Jew in Vogue?* (29).



33 HEALTH CRISIS

Samuel S. Epstein, M.D. and **Liza Gross** argue that the cancer establishment has too much invested in finding a cure for cancer to do the more important work of *Cancer Prevention* (33). Read one doctor's story of frustration and illness in *Extinction*, by **Juliana Rose** (41). **Michael Allen Fox** teaches us how *Vegetarian Thinking* could solve global health problems (46), while **Arthur Waskow** offers a path to health through kabbalistic meditation (40).



47 CHANUKAH

Meditate on the transformation of dark/evil into light/awareness with **Karyn Berger** (47). Learn the real story of Chanukah in our *Supplement*, between pages 48 and 49. Columnists **Lawrence Bush** and **Jeffrey Dekro** teach us how to go *From Gelt to Tzedakah* in their *Torah of Money* (49).

ARTICLES:

- 11 **Legal Policy:** **Peter Gabel** shows how amazingly different our entire approach to law could be in *Imagine Law*.
- 16 **Globalization:** A report on the *State of the World Forum 2000* from **Charles Burack**.
- 32 **Tikkun Olam:** What's *klughartzig*? Columnist **Danny Siegel** explains in a *Smart Heart*.
- 53 **Israel:** **Stephen Zunes** reminds us that we cannot forget the Golan and the *Israeli-Syrian Impasse*.
- 57 **Culture:** Is there *A War Against Boys*? **Michael Kimmel** answers.
- 61 **Profile:** **Andrew Bachman** on Philip Roth's *America From the Waist Down*.
- 80 **Personal Essay:** Thoughts on *Winter*, from **Arthur Magida**.



REVIEWS:

- 65 **Rebecca T. Alpert** on Bonnie Sherr Klein's effort at *Creating an Accessible Life*.
- 67 **Chess Midrash.** **Daniel Schiffrin** on the art of Samuel Bak.
- 70 **Short Takes.** A look at other magazines and the web.
- 72 **Jack Newfield** considers the new *Life of Bobby Kennedy*.
- 75 **Politics as News.** **David Stone** analyzes Kathleen Hall Jamieson's foray into politics and the media.
- 78 **What's in a Name?** **Alicia Ostriker** gives us a penetrating look at Michal Govrin's latest novel.

INSIDE BACK COVER: *Sikkum*: Books TIKKUN Recommends.

Opposite:

The Displaced of Capital by Anne Winters

Front Cover:

Flemish Landscape by Guy Johnson. Oil on paper on aluminum. Courtesy Louis K. Meisel Gallery, New York

Back Cover:

Northern Sun by Elly Simmons. Gouache and acrylic on Bhutanese paper

Sikkum: TIKKUN RECOMMENDS ...

Promise Ahead

Duane Elgin
William Morrow, 2000

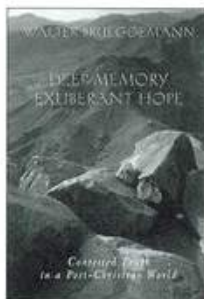
Duane Elgin's *Voluntary Simplicity*, gave voice to those of us who are fed up with waiting for larger social change before transforming our own lives. In this new book, aptly subtitled "a vision of hope and action for humanity's future," Elgin charts a path of conscious evolution. Among its elements: being able to see the universe as alive and permeated by sacred energy, choosing a simpler way of life, restoring and renewing the biosphere, and working toward genuine reconciliation across the boundaries that divide humanity.



Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope

Walter Brueggemann
Fortress Press, 2000

Walter Brueggemann is a professor of "Old Testament" at Columbia Theological Seminary, but he has made a career of pointing out how very "new" and revolutionary is the message of the Hebrew Bible. In the spirit of Abraham Joshua Heschel, Brueggemann insists on taking the Bible seriously. In showing us how the Prophets called on Israel to subvert the empire of the arrogant and instead nurture a non-mainstream vision that would teach the world an alternative truth to its endless subservience to the institutions of power, Brueggemann himself becomes one of the most powerful prophetic voices of contemporary Christianity.



The Talmud and the Internet

Jonathan Rosen
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2000

This is a brilliant celebration of the Talmud and its capacity to include diversity, experimentation and openness to the unexpected. Rosen rejoices in a Judaism which is willing to assimilate outside cultures without worrying that they will conquer its beliefs, open to moneychangers in the Temple ("why shouldn't human activity be interspersed with the



Divine?" he asks provocatively), and always willing to have both "on the one hand" and "on the other hand" rather than the restraints of an absolute faith. Though praising the Internet's capacity to make the distant present, Rosen recognizes that it is "a vast, crass, chaotic organism" which has no moral center—a different kind of openness than that which attracts him to Talmud.

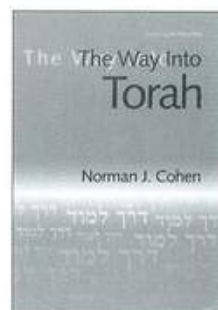
The Way Into Torah

Norman J. Cohen

The Way Into Jewish Prayer

Lawrence A. Hoffman
Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000

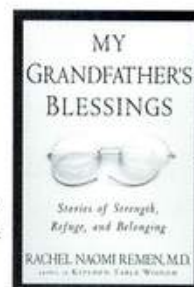
These two thin volumes deliver more than they promise. Not only are they accessible introductions for those with no previous background, they are simultaneously sophisticated rethinking of central aspects of Jewish practice. They are a delight to read and could play a needed role in the adult education of every Jewish community. And they are culturally significant in another way: they are both written by a new generation of intellectual leaders of the Reform movement who, along with Larry Kushner who now joins them at the Hebrew Union College, have made the Reform movement a new center of spiritual creativity with deep insights to offer Jews across denominational lines.



My Grandfather's Blessings

Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D.
Riverhead Books, 2000

Don't be misled by the kitschy presentation. Underneath the seeming superficiality and conversational tone of this book lies the deep wisdom of a medical practitioner whose years of work with cancer patients has given her incredibly useful insights about the spiritual issues we all face. Remen is a spiritual teacher who follows the old Hasidic style of conveying her insights through stories. A rabbi to the world, Remen is a genuine treasure and this book, like her *Kitchen Table Wisdom*, should be read aloud at the dinner table in every Jewish home.



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Managing Editor

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Assistant to the Editor

Leora Wien

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David Van Ness

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Moshe Zeilgold

Controller

Valerie Bach

Copublishers

Victor S. Goldberg

Danny Goldberg

Associate Publisher

Nancy B. Cardozo

Editorial Office: Publisher's Office:

2107 Van Ness, Suite 302 130 Fifth Ave., 7th Floor

San Francisco, CA 94109 New York, NY 10011

415-575-1200 212-414-3232

fax: 415-575-1434 fax: 212-414-3199

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Letters to the Editor

Lieberman—Pro...

To the Editor:

Senator Lieberman, in his critique of President Clinton and in his general demeanor as U.S. Senator, has been of great help to Jews in the United States as a role model: he is principled, well-respected, and honest, a man who has lived a religiously-observant lifestyle and served all Americans without bias. Lieberman himself sheds only good light on the role Jews have played and can play in governing the United States which, despite its failings, is the best guarantor for the rights the Jewish tradition seems to advocate to me: securing liberty and prosperity for as many people as possible.

Your comments against Lieberman (September/October 2000) unfairly disparage this noted statesman, and provide what seems to be an imprudent response from a representative of Jewish ideals.

ADAM ARENSON
Cambridge, MA

...And Con

To the Editor:

I would like to commend Michael Lerner's powerful statement regarding the nomination of Senator Joseph Lieberman as vice-president. While all people concerned about eradicating bigotry are pleased that a Jew received the nomination, Lerner correctly notes that Lieberman's Jewish identity is not sufficient to make us rejoice.

My father, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, always taught that to be a Jew is not simply to be Jewish; to be a Jew is to stand for Jewish principles. A Jew is the representative of the Jewish spirit, he wrote. Lerner correctly noted in his article that Senator Lieberman's politics do not always represent the spirit of Judaism and must be evaluated in those terms. I am grateful for Michael Lerner's courageous voice; he is truly one of my father's most important disciples.

SUSANNAH HESCHEL
Dartmouth College



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To the Editor:

I want to express my support for your sober yet pointed response to the Lieberman nomination (September/October 2000).

Taking seriously Lieberman's self-definition as an "observant Jew," I would suggest that other "observant Jews" scrutinize his policies and legislation in order to ascertain how they do or do not reflect the tradition the Senator lives by. The most valuable message you sent was that "observant Judaism," while it contains the seeds of just and ethical government in most (but not all) areas, does not necessarily translate into the kinds of policies and legislation Senator Lieberman supports. In my mind, Lieberman's commitment to big business and corporate America is not in line with Isaiah or Amos's vision of society.

It is important for America to know that while the Jewish community is proud that America is becoming a place where all minorities (not just Jews) can succeed, there are many "observant Jews" who are staunch (and proud) liberals and fighters for the cause of social justice and the protection of human rights and freedoms in line with the liberal tradition of the West. Perhaps Senator Lieberman has created the opportunity for the rise of a "liberal observant Judaism" which shares his traditionalism but not many of his policies.

SHAUL MAGID

*Jewish Theological Seminary of
America*

Lesser Evil or Greater Good?

To the Editor:

I am deeply disturbed by your vitriolic polemic against "lesser evilism" (September/October 2000). Although you formally insist that "as a non-profit magazine, of course, we do not ever endorse candidates," you manage to call those of us on the Left who support the Gore-Lieberman ticket "idolators," amid a host of other choice invectives. So much for moral self-righteousness.

As a left-liberal Barney Frank/Jesse Jackson Democrat of long standing, I am proud to support the Gore/Lieberman ticket as one that can *win* in a general election. Yes, I like lots of the things Nader says (though I, with Frank, am much aware of his omissions). But there is not a chance such a purist view can take even our single most-liberal-of-all states,

let alone the country. Within the context of a Democratic administration and Congress there will be room to stand up for issues to which we are committed and achieve some of our goals. The purist ideological stance you represent in this debate will only be harmful to that ticket, thus helpful to a Bush victory. This will lead only to the marginalization and embitterment of the Left. If that is supposed to take us "back to the future" of 1968—thanks but no thanks.

I also want to say that I take genuine pride in supporting a ticket whose number two standard bearer is a committed Jew. Although this is far from being my reason for voting Democrat, your rush to proclaim so quickly, "What about African-Americans? What about gays?" strikes me as rather disingenuous. This *is* a breakthrough against a history of real and deep-seated anti-Semitism in America. Let's enjoy it for what it is before leaping up to show how critical and true-to-the-left we remain. As for your comments in the same issue inferring that Lieberman is an Orthodox Jew but "a Hellenist in drag...buying into the worship of money and power," I find you guilty, at the very least, of bad taste.

ARTHUR GREEN

Brandeis University

To the Editor:

After much deliberation, I have come to believe that voting for Gore is the morally responsible thing to do. Here are the arguments of those who say, vote for Nader:

"Gore is too corporate, with no real difference from Bush." In general, yes, Gore has ties to big business: no one could run a successful national campaign today without money from the very wealthy. But whatever Gore's faults, Bush is 100 times worse. For example, some argue that "Gore is tied to the oil industry." But Bush *is* the oil industry! He grew up in Texas, his family was in oil, he helped start an oil company, and his running mate, Dick Cheney, headed one of the world's largest oil and construction companies before joining the campaign.

"Gore is not really an environmentalist." We don't really know what Gore would do if he were in charge. But even if

Gore is pale Green, Bush is ugly Rust! Under Governor Bush, Texas didn't enforce environmental protections and let businesses pollute at will. The city with the worst air pollution in the country is Houston. Gore understands that you can have a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

"Gore is not pro-union, as shown in his position on trade with China." Gore's weakest point may be his record on trade. On the other hand, Gore is talking about fair trade, and making trade agreements that protect workers and the environment. Moreover, at least Gore is seeking labor support, and has won the endorsement of the AFL-CIO. Bush, on the other hand, would actively seek to crush unions. The Republican right is salivating at the prospect of destroying the public employees union. If Bush is elected and the Republicans continue to control Congress, it could be the most devastating blow to unions since Reagan broke the Air Traffic Controllers union.

"A vote for Nader is a vote for change." Yes, a vote for Nader is a vote for change alright, a change from the Clinton/Gore defense of the middle class and poor to Bush, who is buddy-buddy with the radical right and their representatives in Congress.

For those who still think there is not much difference between Gore and Bush, consider the following arguments about why voting for Gore would be a good thing.

- Gore would be much better for women.
- Gore would be much better on gun control.
- Gore would be much better on health care.
- Gore would be much better for protecting essential programs like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.
- Gore would be much better in selecting nominees for the courts, Supreme and federal.

Finally, some people think having Bush in office will make it easier to organize the Left. Remember Germany in the 1930s, when the Communist motto was, "After Hitler, us." They thought Hitler would be so bad that they would then be able to organize more people to take over the country. We all know how that turned out.



LETTERS

If you feel the urge to vote for Nader to send a message, think again about the very real effect on the middle class, unions, women, poor people, the courts, and the environment. The stakes are too high. Come November, do the morally responsible thing: vote for Gore.

ELEANOR LECAIN
Boston, MA

Editor Responds:

The morally destructive elements of voting for a Lesser Evil were explored in our September issue, and I'll come back to that topic in future editorials. But please don't mistake an argument against lesser evilism for an endorsement of Nader—we don't endorse, and if we did, we would be seeking a candidate who explicitly supported the visions articulated in Spirit Matters and in The Bank Teller and Other Essays on the Politics of Meaning. Our recommendation is that you vote for the candidate who comes closest to representing what you really believe.

Mideast Peace?

To the Editor:

The "New Year's Intifadah" on both sides of the Green Line should once and for all put the lie to the claims by the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships—and by extension their societies—that they are ready for a just and lasting peace, or that the Post-Oslo diplomatic process can achieve this end. To begin with, as Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling wrote in the Israeli paper, *Ha'aretz*, Barak has yet to keep even one existing obligation or promise to the Palestinians, which puts him one behind his predecessor Benjamin Netanyahu, who at least pulled out of part of Hebron. Nor have Barak's promises to address continuing discrimination and inequalities faced by Palestinian citizens of Israel been fulfilled in the smallest measure, which accounts for the quick spread of the violence within Israel.

The dynamics of the current violence demand that Israelis who support peace stop accepting the half-measures and deceptions that epitomize Barak's policies, face squarely the oppressive and even racist nature of Israel's history and present-day policies, and demand a holistic transformation of their society that will end the political and economic oppression against Palestinians in Jaffa

as well as Gaza. If Israeli peace and social justice activists cannot articulate a coherent, achievable strategy for large-scale holistic transformation within a Zionist paradigm, then new sources of identity must be imagined before it's too late. In short, the Israeli peace movement must set aside any remaining timidity or desire for achieving "national consensus" and assume the mantle of the prophets that constitute our true historical and religious model.

The violence also demonstrates the utter failure of Palestinian society and its leaders to evolve new, nonviolent strategies against Israeli occupation during the last decade. Despite the presence of incredibly talented and courageous Palestinian individuals and NGOs working on both nonviolent resistance and nation-building efforts, on the larger political and social levels it is clear that Palestinians have yet to disabuse themselves of the notion that violence can get them the state and full independence they most desire. Regardless of whether the violence has been planned or spontaneous, Palestinians need to ask themselves some tough questions: Was whatever political gain (or emotional catharsis) that could be achieved from the violence going to be worth the life of twelve-year-old Muhammad al-Durrah, killed in his father's arms as the world watched, not to mention the scores of other Palestinian victims young and old? What would have happened if instead of starting violent protests when Sharon "visited" the Haram al-Sharif you just laughed at him, or ignored him—or even offered him a cup of tea and quietly explained to him how his history of violence against Palestinians has all been in vain? When will you realize that violence, by its very nature, will never bring a just peace, since 1) the balance of power with Israel means it will always be visited overwhelmingly upon you, and 2) as a society you have never fully tried the type of full-scale non-violent civil disobedience that brought down colonialism in India, Jim Crow in America, and totalitarian rule in countless countries around the world. (Such a movement would have also greatly increased the number of Israeli Jews willing to join your struggle.)



Even if violence could achieve independence, the psychological and moral damage to Palestinian society will be irreparably deep. Palestinians have only to look across the Green Line to see where this path leads. Indeed, the sad truth is that an escalating cycle of violence will do irreparable moral and political damage to Israel, but it will lead to a disaster as great as the 1948 Nakbah for Palestinians. If the forces for peace on both sides aren't willing both to face hard questions and to put their bodies on the line for the radical peace that seems now the only viable peace left, this is likely where we're heading.

MARK LEVINE
Cornell University

To the Editor:

I would like to salute your courage regarding Barak's refusal to build a truly pro-peace coalition government (July/August 2000). As a Palestinian I strongly believe Israel will never achieve any measure of normality unless it abandons its definition of itself as a solely Jewish state.

Jerome Slater's secular state proposal in the same issue, despite your strong objections to it, represents in my view a serious attempt to grapple with the issue in an objective way. Unless both sides accept the fact that they are eternally and inextricably stuck with each other, any solution that is based on the separation of the two peoples is an exercise in wishful thinking.

A secular democratic state in Palestine is the only hope for a lasting solution to the Palestinian-Israeli dispute. Although it may sound hopelessly idealistic, impractical, and naive to some people, we should never underestimate the human ability to ultimately see the light and recognize the power of logic and common sense.

FAISAL TBEILEH
San Francisco, CA

CORRECTIONS

In the September/October issue, we inadvertently omitted an item from the table of contents, a poem by Greg Miller titled "Ark" on page 20. We also misspelled the name of one of our artists, Leela Corman. We apologize for these errors.

Media Morality

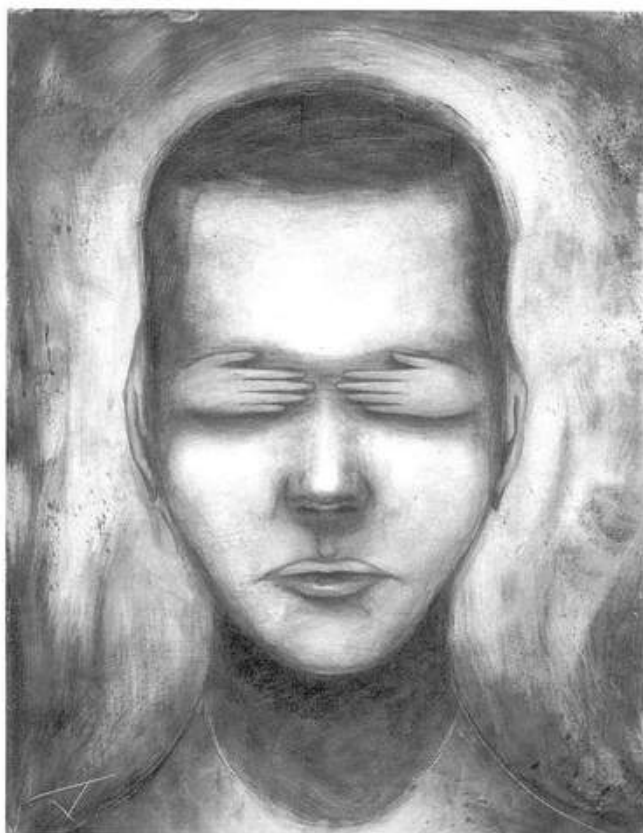
Danny Goldberg

In the Eighties, when TIKKUN was first created, Ronald Reagan had embraced spiritual and religious language, and the religious right was, for the moment, the predominant political voice expressing its ideas in spiritual terms. It is easy to see how someone watching TV back then, someone not steeped in the nuances of public policy, might have inferred that conservatism was the more God-centered, spiritually-attuned philosophy.

The Democratic national spokesmen of that time—Walter Mondale, Michael Dukakis, Tip O'Neill, and Jim Wright—did little to rectify such a perception, and the organized left, such as it was, eschewed religious and spiritual language and mention altogether. Into this breach stepped TIKKUN, speaking for millions of religious and spiritually alive people whose morality and faith co-existed with, and in some cases mandated, their participation in progressive politics. Moreover, TIKKUN proposed that left-of-center politics must speak to the broader American public in idealistic spiritual terms rather than solely in economic terms. A model of such progressive/spiritual interaction was close at hand: the civil rights movement, which had its roots in black Christian churches in the late 1950s, succeeded, in part, because of the ability of leaders like Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to spiritually touch the hearts and consciences of millions of white Americans who joined with minorities for moral reasons.

The good news is that Democratic politicians and consultants were paying attention to this critique. Bill and Hillary Clinton both adapted some language from the politics of meaning. Of more lasting significance, Stan Greenberg in 1991 wrote an article about Democrats winning back "Reagan Democrats," particularly focusing on auto workers in Macomb County, Michigan. He wrote, "Democrats cannot win over the average family unless there are some limits to the party's moral agnosticism." Greenberg worked for Clinton in 1992, and was brought in to consult for Gore this year.

The bad news is that the stylistic deference to spiritual meaning has been linked to a middle-of-the-road, "new Democrat" politics that has led to the most conservative Democratic ticket ever: Gore-Lieberman. Unlike Jimmy Carter, whose life's work since leaving the White House has been a constant stream of selfless effort for the poor and for



peace, the Gore-Lieberman antidote to perceived "moral agnosticism" seems limited to exhortations of personal faith—and high-profile attacks on show business. Senator Lieberman talks about his religion more than any national candidate in memory and has joined William Bennett, Reagan's "drug czar," in zealously condemning Hollywood entertainment.

These "moral crusaders" were energized by the recent Federal Trade Commission report on the marketing of violent entertainment to children. The report, instigated by President Clinton in response to the murders at Columbine High School, loudly condemned Hollywood for their hypocrisy in marketing to children works that "by their own standards" are inappropriate for those children. Clinton and Gore echoed the findings and were joined by virtually all members of Congress, the Washington media, and everyone else who has spoken on the subject.

Thus it was that I became a stand in for Sister Souljah in this election's Democratic attempt to differentiate itself from mythical McGovernism. In early September I accepted an invitation to participate in a U.S. Senate Commerce Committee hearing on the FTC report. There I was questioned by Republicans John McCain and Sam Brownback and Democrat Bryan Dorgan. Subsequently I did a round of TV chat shows, debating pop culture with George Will, C. Delores Tucker, Mary Matalin, Oliver North, and the grand old man of cultural moralizing, the Rev. Jerry Falwell, whose ardent support of Ronald Reagan was one of the factors leading to the creation of this magazine.

For the record, the charge of hypocrisy is a complete lie as far as the music business goes, and fundamentally untrue

with regard to movies. The record business has never had any age recommendation whatsoever for its products. The "Parental Advisory" stickers serve to inform parents and retailers that an album has lots of curse words. The movie business's "R" rating does not mean that children shouldn't attend, but that they shouldn't attend without a parent or another adult. Thus the FTC bloviation about "deceptive marketing" was nonsense. At least Senator Brownback gave up the pretense of worrying about marketing and ended his remarks at the hearing I attended by asking media companies, with regard to their most offensive entertainment, "if they would just stop putting some of this out."

Only Falwell uttered the unthinkable: when asked on MSNBC's "Equal Time" by former Clinton advisor Paul Begala if he thought controversial rapper Eminem should be censored, Falwell snapped, "He should be in jail." Brownback and Falwell aside, there appears to be a consensus that censorship is bad. John McCain told me earnestly that he opposed any form of censorship, a view echoed by the same bipartisan consensus that holds their nose at so many other manifestations of popular culture. Likewise, the Washington media pundits, who will eagerly join in any attack on Hollywood, regularly affirm their commitment to uphold freedom of speech.

The answer the punditocracy always comes up with to oppose legal censorship is "the First Amendment," as if that was an immutable law of physics. In fact, the courts of the United States only really began to apply the First Amendment to artistic speech in the 1950s, based mostly on Supreme Court opinions of William Brennan. And even as the courts were clarifying and limiting the applications of obscenity law, artists like Lenny Bruce were being prosecuted, and yes, jailed, as recently as the late Sixties.

Today the Brennan definition of the First Amendment appears safely enshrined in the hearts of most Americans, and suggestions such as Falwell's are viewed as politically marginal as those of Noam Chomsky. I think, however, that Falwell is only expressing the logical extension of the increasingly popular theory regarding pop culture's supposedly malevolent effects. If, as some in the political elite suggest, entertainment can be truly immoral, then a moral person would have no choice but to work for a politics that would cause the courts, eventually, to restrict artistic speech as they did in the years before Allen Ginsberg's "Howl," was declared legal.

Putting aside, for a moment, the First Amendment and the political unlikeliness of actual censorship, the political/media brouhaha regarding entertainment at election time raises moral and political questions relevant to TIKKUN:

*When asked if he thought
controversial rapper
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"He should be in jail."*

1. Is America more or less moral as the result of thirty years of free artistic speech?

Assuming it could be done (highly unlikely given technology and globalization), would we have a more moral society if electronic entertainment was limited by content standards similar to the "Hayes code" that dictated movie content in the Thirties and Forties? Has our society, as George Will said to me with his nose appropriately wrinkled, been "coarsened?" If so, is this morally bad?

Societies in which artists and entertainers, hacks as well as geniuses, can explore the dark side of human psychology are healthier than those that repress it through censorship, shame, or "voluntary" standards. I believe that this insight was at the soul of the Supreme Court's decision to apply the First Amendment to controversial art and entertainment. One thing I am sure about is that "offensive" music does not become popular because of corporations.

No one running the big record companies fifteen years ago liked rap music. Rap emerged from tiny independent labels because masses of teenagers loved the integration of black ghetto culture and post-rock 'n' roll rhythms. Much of the cultural tension in American music is about people whose musical taste offends their neighbors. "Love thy neighbor as thyself," might imply that it's wrong to blast music so loud that unwilling people are forced to hear it, but it certainly doesn't justify the demonization of any kind of artistic cultural expression you personally dislike.

2. Are Democrats well served by Lieberman's vilifying of popular entertainment?

Democrats leading the bandwagon on efforts to stigmatize entertainment and ignore issues such as the drug war are going to pay a very steep price for the quick high of swing-voter satisfaction. As this was being written in late September, polls were showing Gore faring more poorly among young voters than older ones. More to the point, youth are the shock troops for progressive change. By driving young people away from politics, Democrats are creating an ever more conservative voter pool.

3. What of the Left, both within and outside the Democratic Party?

Ralph Nader, a heroic figure, is certainly not very attuned to either spiritual tradition or popular culture. His integrity and candor make him a compelling figure, but if we are to be concerned with trying to build a political system that addresses "meaning" in people's lives we cannot dismiss the language of popular culture. Without speaking for anyone else at TIKKUN, I have a candidate who is unambiguously progressive and who is perfectly comfortable with the language of popular culture. Michael Moore for President in 2004! □

Israel and Palestine

Murdering the Spirit of God

Michael Lerner

By the time you read this, Arafat and Barak may be circulating a new peace agreement. But the resentment built on thirty-three years of occupation and ten years of meaningless peace agreements, exploded into violence in October 2000 in ways that will make it hard to convince either Israelis or Palestinians that hope can be turned into reality. Ariel Sharon's visit to Jerusalem's Temple Mount sparked years of pent-up anger and despair.

The world sighed in pain as we watched an innocent twelve-year-old crouching down in his father's arms and crying for mercy before Israeli soldiers' bullets killed him. For a moment, even many Israelis wondered whether their government was going too far.

Days later, with dozens of Palestinians shot dead by Israel's overwhelming military force, Israeli Knesset chair Avraham Burg, writing in the *New York Times*, purported to be puzzled at the Palestinian reaction. His was a willful ignorance characteristic of many Israelis and American Jews who imagine themselves to be the height of reasoned liberalism. After all, Burg argued, we offered them a peace agreement, and of course we would never give up our control over the Temple Mount (which just happens to be the site of one of Islam's holiest places of worship).

And so, the disconnect grew between many Israelis, who felt they had no choice but to cheer on Ehud Barak's massive use of unrestrained force against the rioters, and the rest of the world, which acted through the United Nations to condemn Israeli behavior and to insist on an international inquiry as to what actually happened. (This demand was supported by the Israeli human rights organization, B'Tselem, which pointed to the abusive tactics of Israeli police in responding to the anti-Sharon demonstrators as the key element touching off subsequent rioting.)

Just for the sake of the record, a record which many American Jews and Israelis conveniently forget, let us remind ourselves of why there is so much pent-up anger among Palestinians.

■ For thirty-three years, a third of a century, the Israeli



In this image from video, Jamal Aldura shouts towards the camera as he protects his twelve-year-old son Mohammed Jamal from crossfire Saturday, Sept. 30, 2000, near Netzarim Jewish settlement in the southern Gaza City. Moments later the boy slumped to the ground fatally hit, and his father, gravely wounded, lost consciousness.

army has occupied the West Bank and Gaza—preventing Palestinians from traveling freely, imposing taxes and tariffs, imprisoning Palestinians who protested and often keeping them in prison for months without ever formally charging them of any offense. The army has sometimes engaged in acts of torture (B'Tselem's reports documenting this torture, often published in this magazine, are no longer denied by the Israeli government), and has systematically harassed and humiliated the civilian Palestinian population. Those who have subscribed to the TIKKUN listserv have received monthly accounts of another aspect of the occupation: the destruction of Palestinian homes by the occupying army on the grounds that the homes have not been given permits for expansion (permits frequently given to Jews but systematically denied to Palestinians by the occupiers).

■ Ten years ago the Israeli government began a "peace process" which culminated in the Oslo Accords. These Accords promised a five-year process in which a final settlement would be negotiated. The prime minister who signed that agreement, Yitzhak Rabin, was murdered by right-wing Jews who had been seeking to overthrow his government, and shortly thereafter Israelis elected Benjamin Netanyahu who effectively thwarted the implementation of the Oslo Accords. In the beginning, our magazine was among those who severely criticized Edward Said and other Palestinians who expressed skepticism about the Oslo process. We urged them to be patient and to allow the process to work itself out—and we assured them that the majority of Israelis would push for a solution to the problem which would allow genuine Palestinian national self-determination. Instead, the Barak government came to power, led by a military general determined to show that he was strong. Though he had been

EDITORIALS

elected with a solid majority supporting his promise to make peace, what ensued were a set of policies which further consolidated and extended Israeli rule over the territories. Settlements that had originally been created by Ariel Sharon with the express purpose of ensuring that there would never be a viable Palestinian state were given assurances by Barak that they would never be dismantled; instead the Barak government built more roads to these settlements, indicating a clear intention to retain them as part of Israel. Moreover, Barak allowed the expansion of existing settlements.

■ Pressured by President Clinton to participate in peace negotiations at Camp David this summer, Ehud Barak proceeded to convince the Western press that Israel had made concession after concession but that Islamic intransigence over the Temple Mount made a successful conclusion of the negotiations impossible. In fact, the story is quite different. Israel has never been willing to acknowledge its moral culpability for expelling hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the 1948 war, and today acknowledges no responsibility for the fate of several million of their descendants still living in refugee camps around the Arab world and within the Occupied Territories. Though a Jew born in Brooklyn has an automatic “right of return” to Israel and will be given financial support by the government of Israel, Palestinians who were born in Israel and subsequently expelled have no right to return, nor was much progress made on this issue at Camp David II.

Nor was Barak willing to dismantle the most provocative settlements (e.g. the hotbed of hatred and racism in Kiryat Arba). Instead, he simply insisted that Palestinians would have to accept these settlements, in the midst of a Palestinian state, with Israeli roads linking those settlements to Israel. Yet many of those settlements are filled with religious or nationalist fanatics who cheered on the murder of Rabin, and who say they will never accept any agreement that cedes land to the Palestinians. For years, these people have engaged in provocative actions against the Palestinians, under the protection of the Israeli army. Imagine what would happen if the Palestinian authorities sought to impose law and order on these settlers. Immediately, the Israeli army would intervene (no doubt while the settlers screamed, “pogrom!”). Just as we saw in October that the lands which Israel supposedly ceded to the Palestinians were immediately invaded by Israeli tanks and planes as soon as there was a problem, so the land being “offered” to Palestinians (as in writer Thomas Friedman’s ultra deceptive, “we are giving you the best deal you will ever get—and it includes 97 per-

cent of the land”) is a phony offer unless it includes the ability of the Palestinians to keep Israel from invading. Such continuing questions around the settlements indicate that it is simply not true that these key issues had been resolved at Camp David II, certainly not in a way that would provide Arafat with a package that would satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Meanwhile, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza went through yet another summer in which there was severe water rationing for Palestinians throughout the Occupied Territories—sometimes not enough water to wash more than once in three or four days in the sweltering heat—while settlers sat on the porches of prosperous villas and squandered this precious commodity watering their lawns.

■ Nor is it accurate to represent the Palestinians as irrationally seeking total ownership and sovereignty over the Temple Mount. Their concerns about the Temple Mount stem from the actual loss of access to their holy sites imposed by the Israeli government. For many years, Israeli control over Jerusalem has been used to effectively exclude most Muslims living in Gaza or the West Bank from steady access to the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Under the guise of shutting the area for “security reasons,” Israelis have only rarely given West Bank and Gaza Muslims access to their holy site. We Jews who were rightly outraged at being denied access to the Western Wall during the Jordanian occupation of Jerusalem between 1948–1967 (policies that were not created by the Palestinian people, but by the King of Jordan) have been doing the same thing to most religious Muslims for a dozen years.

■ Israeli insistence on maintaining power and sovereignty over the Temple Mount is not based on some religious necessity, but on nationalist arrogance. It was the secular leaders, Ehud Barak and Shlomo Ben Ami, who provided the massive military backup for the incendiary visit of Likud’s secular leader Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount. That visit was not aimed at serving God, but at provoking conflict. Sharon is well known as the murderous butcher responsible for hundreds of civilian Palestinian deaths, and his purpose was to symbolically demonstrate that Israel would retain control of the Mount, and hence continue to exclude most Palestinians from access to their holy site.

Most religious authorities have banned Jews from walking on the Temple Mount lest they violate the site of the Holy of Holies of the ancient Temple, forbidden to anyone but the High Priest. These religious authorities believe that Jews should return to the area only when the messiah comes.

If Barak wanted to negotiate a peace agreement, he could have agreed to allow Palestinians interim sovereignty over the Temple Mount—interim until the Messiah comes (an easy criterion, given Isaiah’s description of the messianic age as one in which “the lion will lie down with the lamb and nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore”).

As we went to press, we learned that the company which manages our listserv lost all its data, including the email addresses of all listserv subscribers. You can subscribe to our new listserv, Tikkun@egroups.com, by going to www.egroups.com.

No, it was not religious necessity but the macho, outdated notion of sovereignty (rooted in nineteenth century nationalist aspirations) among both Palestinians and Israelis that has shaped this conflict. Yet the biblical God supposedly respected by both sides makes unequivocally clear that no one has a right to the Holy Land.

Over and over again, the Torah states that one can live and create a society in the Holy Land only if one is living a life in accord with the highest ethical values of justice and "loving the stranger." The very ownership of the Promised Land was forbidden, "because the entire earth is mine," says the Eternal One of Israel. Even in biblical days, there were nationalists who heard God's voice in a more chauvinistic way. To straighten them out, the prophet Isaiah heard God talking about the future of the Temple Mount this way: "My house [the Temple] shall be a house of prayer for all nations (*kee veytee veyt tfillah yee-kareh le'chol ha'amim*)."

But Ehud Barak and his government have nothing in common with the prophetic religion of the Bible: their orientation is pragmatic and power-oriented. Thus, in the days before the eruption of violence, Barak was publicly suggesting that he would consider creating a new unity government with Ariel Sharon and the Likud Party.

And then, given all this, Avraham Burg tells us that he can't understand why the Palestinians are not more grateful at all that the Israelis have offered them!

Perhaps he and his fellow "doves" in the Labor Party ought to ask the Arab citizens of Israel why they joined in the rioting throughout Israel in October. Or perhaps he and other Labor "doves" might already know that these Arab Israelis, courted by Barak during the election, were then told that their elected representatives could not be part of the Israeli government because, given the accepted level of racism in Israel, the presence of Arab citizens of the State of Israel would make the government appear illegitimate in the eyes of many Jewish citizens of the State. Imagine the outrage in the United States if, after the riots of 1968, the national government had declared that it could not allow African Americans to participate in the government for fear that doing so would delegitimize it in the eyes of Southern segregationists (as it undoubtedly would have).

Or perhaps Burg and his fellow doves, or the many good-hearted liberals of American Jewish life, honestly don't know that the Israeli government gives more money for social services to Jewish towns than to Arab towns, that it sanctions discrimination in housing against Israeli Arabs, and that most Israeli Arabs have felt increasingly like second class citizens in the State.

If they didn't know any of this before, will they know it now? No! Instead they will manage to blame Palestinians for their "irrational" rioting. Rather than notice the context of occupation, torture, betrayed promises, and arrogance, they will point to the teenagers with rocks and focus on their provocations. Clothed in self-righteousness, they will remain

deaf to the cries of pain of those over whom they rule.

We Jews have much to atone for in the conduct of the Israeli government and its cheerleaders in the United States.

At the same time, we at TIKKUN are *also* critical of the conduct of the Palestinian Authority and of many Palestinians. Though we understand their outrage, we do not believe that violent response is appropriate or sensible.

Violence is morally wrong—even the violence of the oppressed. And violence is counter-productive. The violence in October only managed to solidify major sections of the Israeli population behind Barak's repressive policies. Israelis are psychologically incapable of seeing themselves as the superior force with one of the best-equipped armies in the world facing a group of mostly unarmed civilians; they need to see themselves as the besieged and the threatened. So when Palestinian Authority policemen use their light arms against Israeli soldiers, or when Palestinians throw rocks against the Israeli army, they give Israelis precisely the excuse that they have been looking for to justify the endless continuation of the Occupation.

Far more effective for Palestinians would be a campaign of systematic nonviolent civil disobedience. Yet despite efforts on the part of a few morally sensitive Palestinian activists, the vast majority of Palestinians have never been willing to try nonviolent civil disobedience as the way to resist Israeli power.

Nonviolence has another advantage: it recognizes that transcendence and change is possible among the Israelis as well—and that touching their hearts is far more effective than threatening their lives. Most Israelis are not fascists, so the right kind of civil disobedience could play a role in breaking through the encrusted levels of fear and denial that are only strengthened when they see their own young men in the army confronting bricks and molotov cocktails. That's why Martin Luther King Jr. was so much more effective than the Black Panthers: he kept reminding the other side that he would not let them forget their own humanity and their capacity to get beyond their own fears. This is what a spiritual consciousness can add to a struggle. Until the Palestinians can approach that level of moral vision they are likely to find themselves defeated on every other front.

We also recognize that the Palestinian people have not been morally clean at every point in the struggle. The Palestinian people have never been willing to hear or acknowledge the history of the Jewish people, and hence have been unable to acknowledge that the Jewish claim to their ancient homeland and their desire to worship at the Western Wall (the lower part of the Temple Mount) is not a product of Western imperialism but a legitimate expression of national and religious longing. This refusal to acknowledge Jewish claims to the Western Wall has revived Israeli fears that if they did agree to a settlement of Jerusalem in which Palestinians had real sovereignty, that agreement would produce a return to the pre-1967 situation in which Jews were

prevented from coming close to the Wall. Very few Jews will ever accept that outcome.

Here at TIKKUN, the present situation leaves us saddened. We are saddened by the anger and loss of support we face for our willingness to speak the truth as we see it. We are saddened by the pathetic state of the Israeli left and by its lack of coherent vision or strategy.

But most of all, we are saddened by the endless suffering imposed on the Palestinian people in the name of the Jewish people, sometimes with the active cooperation of those who claim to speak in the name of God. From our standpoint, this is the ultimate *chillul hashem*, desecration of God's name.

We declare loudly and unequivocally: Palestinians are as valued by God as Jews, Palestinians are created as equal in God's image as Jews. We, as Jews and other peoples of faith, can no longer shut our eyes or close our ears to the suffering of the Palestinian people. We want the world to know that in this dark period there were Jews who stood up and proclaimed their commitment to a Judaism that would fight for a world in which every human being is treated with the respect and the sense of sanctity that are central to a spiritual vision of the world.

The Unity of All Being

It should be the simplest idea—and yet it is the hardest for any of us to grasp. We are one, all part of one unified totality that manifests the love and goodness of all.

And yet, we've been taught to see ourselves primarily from the standpoint of our differentness—from nature and from each other.

We are each of us a manifestation of the Unity of Being, a moment in the development of Spirit, part of the consciousness that pervades All Being. Our lives feel meaningful to the extent that we can connect them to the highest calling we have, a calling to more fully manifest Spirit in our lives.

At the same time, we inherited another reality: the intense anxiety of parents who internalized the fears and concerns of the competitive market. That anxiety is so pervasive that liberal ideas of school reform today are built around the notion of school testing: "If only we could get schools to produce students who will perform well on objective tests, we will be assured that they will have the skills to succeed in an increasingly competitive world market."

Parents worry whether they can get their children into the right preschool which will teach them skills to get them into the right grade school which will teach them skills to get into the right college which will teach them skills to get into the right graduate or professional school which will get their little toddler into the kind of job where he or she can be economically secure. Many children must contend with these parental and societal anxieties at just the moment when they are first coming to self-awareness and first able to

experience and consciously affirm the love and goodness of the universe.

No wonder, then, that even as infants we can intuit a tension in our existence between our own perceptions of the universe and the perceptions that are the *cantus firmus*, or underlying presuppositions, upon which language and communication with parents and the rest of the world are based. On the one hand, we are filled with overwhelming love and trust for those around us and for the marvel of creation. We see ourselves reflected in the eyes of our parents or caregivers, and it is in this recognition that we get a sense of who we are.

Especially as children, we are drawn to others and the world. We feel connected to all other beings, to strangers, to animals, to plants, and to the totality. We find it difficult to distinguish between ourselves and the world, feeling our Unity with All.

Yet, on the other hand, we were from the first moments, possibly even in the womb, experiencing and taking into our own nervous system the anxieties and fears of our parents and of all around them, their deep certainty that there is not enough to go around, their conviction that we will have to struggle to survive and that we can't trust or depend on others, that we are fundamentally alone. Nor were they just being neurotic—they were conveying to us the common sense of the world in which they lived, and the depression they had experienced as they found no alternative but to adjust to "reality."

Without a language to process all this, we quickly come to experience a tear or rip in Being itself, and much of our initial sense of the Unity of All Being is undermined by this tear. Through this opening comes the necessity of developing a differentiated self.

That higher consciousness is available to everyone today. It involves ongoing spiritual work on oneself and on one's society. It's easy to have a momentary flash of recognition of our interconnectedness with each other and with the universe. But to sustain that consciousness, to have it become the shaping reality of our daily lives and of our society—that's where Spirit Matters most. And when that recognition cannot be sustained we get levels of pathology that are truly destructive—including many of the aspects of contemporary political life both in Israel and the United States. □

There's one very simple and direct thing you can do to help keep TIKKUN's voice flourishing: Let your Holiday list (Chanukah or Christmas) include many gift subscriptions to TIKKUN. Your friends will love it, and you will be helping us immensely. When you buy the magazine on the newsstand we get less money and it costs you more—so please subscribe and please buy gift subscriptions for people you know (they don't have to be Jewish to love the magazine).

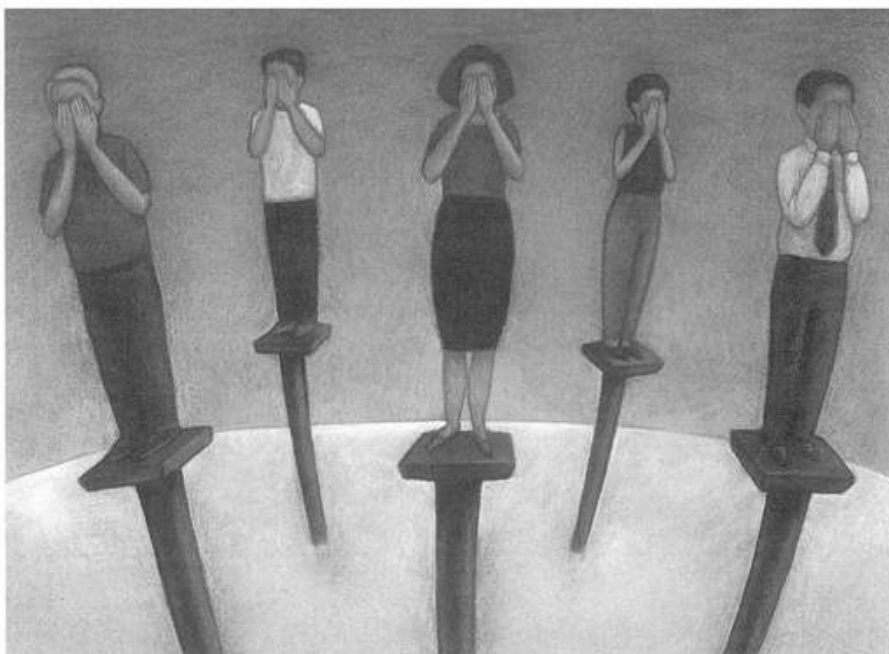
Imagine Law

Peter Gabel

This fall will see the publication of the *IMAGINE Project*, a collection of essays compiled and edited by author Marianne Williamson and inspired, in part, by John Lennon's utopian song of the same name. Appearing under the title *IMAGINE: What America Could Be in the 21st Century* and published by Rodale Press, the book will contain essays by such writers as Deepak Chopra, Dean Ornish, Thomas Moore, James Redfield, Paul Hawken, John Robbins, Thom Hartmann, David Korten, Barbara Marx Hubbard, and *TIKKUN* Editor Michael Lerner. Each was asked to describe some aspect of American life and culture according to his or her highest vision of what America could be in the next hundred years—in other words, to not be constrained by the “realism” that, as *TIKKUN* has emphasized, is the main self-imposed defense against mobilizing people's hopes for a fundamentally transformed world. We here publish associate editor Peter Gabel's profound vision of what law could be if we re-imagined it according to our highest aspirations.

The most profound definition of justice is Martin Luther King Jr.'s: “Love correcting that which revolts against Love.” Its power comes from its affirmation that we are first of all *connected*, that as individuals we are but unique incarnations of a spiritual force that unites us, and that justice is the making manifest of that love by correcting, through the inherent ethical call that this love makes upon every one of us and all of us, the spiritual distortions that revolt against love and seek to deny it. It was to this inherent ethical understanding emanating from the very essence of our social existence, pulling upon the conscience of the oppressor as much as giving courage to the oppressed, that King always addressed himself. Injustice is as self-evident to us as the presence of justice—even the Nazi cannot stop killing for fear of becoming aware of what he knows—and it is the necessity of love that both enables us to tell jus-

Peter Gabel is president of New College of California, associate editor of *TIKKUN*, and author of *The Bank Teller and Other Essays on the Politics of Meaning* (Acada Books, 2000).



stice from injustice and calls upon us to move from the one to the other.

Law ought to be the particular temporal embodiment of our effort as a real historical community to move from the one to the other. Law is not a body of rules or any other such thing-like entity, but rather a *culture of justice* whose ethical legitimacy depends upon how deeply and sincerely it enables us to carry out the work of justice, of love correcting that which revolts against love. Thus conceived, legal culture ought to be a spiritual practice through which the community calls upon love's evolving wisdom to heal the spiritual distortions that continue to alienate us from love itself as the realization of our social being. Like the mountain climber who *first* throws his pick up to the top of the mountain, making sure that the pick is anchored so as to maximize the tension in his rope, and who *then* seeks to pull himself upward by intuitively gauging the rightness of every step in relation to his ultimate and transcendent end, law must maintain its connection to justice by following an ethical intuition anchoring the present to the future, an intuition of what we are in our being but are not yet in reality.

America's legal culture at the turn of the millennium has temporarily lost this connection to justice because its great historical accomplishment—the affirmation of the freedom of the individual and the protection of the individual from officially sanctioned group coercion—has been misunderstood to require the denial of the spiritual bond that unites the individual to the other and, through love, fulfills the individual in his or her social existence. As a result, alongside the accomplishments of constitutional democracy and the Bill of Rights, which liberated the individual from the officially sanctioned religious and political oppression of previous historical periods, we have created a society of disconnected monads, spiritually iso-

Law must maintain its connection to justice by following an ethical intuition ... of what we are in our being but are not yet in reality.

lated and starved for love and recognition. Not only has this collective spiritual starvation now progressed to the point of posing a threat to the very existence of the planet (because the denial of the universal need for loving connection has spawned a pathological, paranoid scramble to exploit everything outside oneself—other people and the natural world—in order to “save” oneself), it has also failed to secure the liberty of the individual in whose name the denial of our spiritual bond was legislated. Today as “free individuals,” we live most of our lives in a completely unnecessary spiritual prison, each of us longing for the same liberation that only we can provide each other, each of us denying that this longing exists within ourselves because we doubt that our longing would or could be reciprocated by the other. Since this is the IMAGINE project, let us begin by acknowledging that it is we, and not merely Eleanor Rigby, who are all the lonely people, withdrawn into our heads and peering out at a social world whose collective gaze we have come to fear and whose love, whose reciprocating acceptance and affirming recognition, is at the same time our only spiritual salvation.

Of course the law is not exclusively to blame for this, but it does have a special responsibility because it legitimizes our predicament in the name of justice. Law cannot exist without claiming to be just: it would be superfluous to elevate what are merely orders backed by the threat of violence to some higher cultural status. But when law loses its true spiritual connection to justice, it becomes “legitimation”—a justification of the status quo that lacks the ethical legitimacy that only moral anchorage in true justice, Martin Luther King’s justice, can provide. Law as legitimation exploits the longing for justice by using the claim of justice to legitimate an alienated society that the community, deep in its core, experiences as spiritually and ethically illegitimate.

Thus however much we are tempted to blame the present ecological and spiritual crisis on the global capitalist marketplace, for example, we must realize that this marketplace is held in place, so to speak, by a legal culture that through a vast network of “rights” allows the community of souls that form that marketplace to believe that what it is doing is right and even required by justice itself. If the prevailing culture of justice declares that individual liberty means there exists no spiritual force, no essential love, that unites us to each other and to the sacredness of the natural world and the wider universe, then the universal longings of the soul are in contradiction with the community’s public declaration—through the official political and legal institutions that define the community’s very public existence—of the ethical basis of community membership. To put it simply, absent the support of a spiritual/cultural/political movement, the isolated

soul cannot but believe that its longing for a loving and spiritually connected society is “wrong” and that the ethics of the marketplace is both “right” and a condition of social membership. Thus the prevailing legal culture, which we begin to internalize even before the explicit conditioning of seventh and eighth-grade civics class, plays a unique and powerful role not only in sustaining what is, but in keeping our spiritual longings and our spiritual knowledge a collective and even unconscious secret.

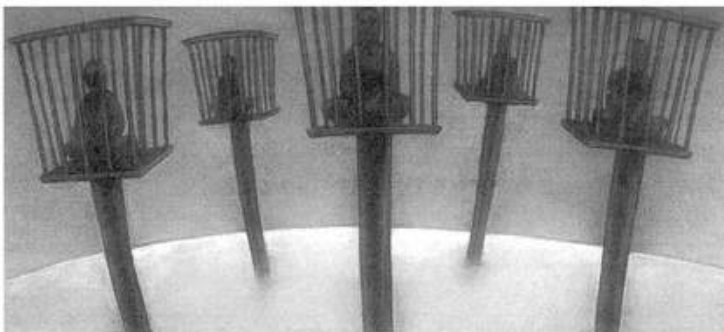
Since what we are to imagine, in a moment, is precisely the legal/spiritual revolution that will dissolve these invisible walls that separate us, we must first enumerate the elements of our existing legal culture that contribute to this state of affairs and that must be revolutionized. All of these elements reflect the central mistaken conviction that the protection of individual liberty requires the denial of, rather than the affirmation of, the spiritual bond that unites us. Here are the most important ones:

1. Our legal culture declares that disputes are to be resolved through an adversary system that defines differences as antagonistic clashes of conflicting interests, fosters hostility, mutual deprecation, and lying, and rejects any moral objective that might inform the process beyond the parties’ own objectives, beyond their self-interested goals. Protection of the “rights of the individual” is thought to require that each side treat the other with skepticism and mistrust, to demean the other’s position while exaggerating the virtue of your own, to use cross-examination to undermine the testimony of even those you believe to be truthful, and to conceal any information that might be harmful to your side unless your opponent extracts it from you under penalty of perjury (only in rare circumstances is voluntary disclosure legally required). The adversary process assumes that justice is best served by the use of evidentiary rules that limit what the judge and jury may hear to the proof of empirically verifiable facts. Any evidence regarding the spiritual and social *meaning* of the dispute or of the social and ethical context that might bring out this meaning is inadmissible because it is regarded as “merely subjective,” merely matters of opinion that cannot be determined to be true or untrue and therefore can only unfairly prejudice the objectivity of the proceeding. The assumption is that the vindication of “individual rights” is the basis of law’s claim to justice, and that objectivity in pursuit of that end is best assured by having an impartial third-party (sometimes the judge, sometimes a jury) evaluate each side’s case after the other has had a full opportunity to destroy it.

2. Once the “facts” are thus determined, the basic rules of substantive law that are used to resolve disputes—

When law loses its true spiritual connection to justice, it becomes “legitimation,” a justification of the status quo.

embodied in, for example, the law of contracts, torts, corporations, and property—assume that people are essentially unconnected monads



client's ends, irrespective of the impact of these ends on others, on the society as a whole, or on the environment.

whose principal desire is to pursue their own material self-interest in the competitive marketplace, and whose principal social concern is limited to protecting their persons and property against unwanted interference by others. Even the Constitution, often thought to be among the world's great documents in securing social justice, provides no recognition of the human longing for community, for social connection, for the authenticity of mutual recognition, for the creation of a society that fosters our awareness of the sacredness of life itself and of the natural world. Instead, the main text of the Constitution provides only the formal structure to secure a democracy of strangers, an unconnected collection of individuals protected against their neighbors by the secret ballot and against abuses by the government itself through the "checks and balances" secured by the separation of powers. Similarly, the Bill of Rights does not aspire to *connect* us to one another but to protect us against each other, against the community's interfering with our right as isolated individuals to speak, to assemble (if as disconnected monads we can find anyone to assemble with), to be secure in our homes (those supposed havens in a heartless world), and even to keep others from taking away our guns. Indeed, the current preoccupation with "the right to bear arms" is an example of a highly visible appeal to the Bill of Rights (in this case the Second Amendment) that reveals how clearly its protections equate individual freedom with fear of the other rather than connection with and love for the other.

3. In their training and in the disciplinary and ethical rules that govern the legal profession, lawyers are encouraged and even to some extent required to ignore ethical considerations beyond the narrow self-interest of the client. Because our legal culture lacks a spiritual and moral direction, or more precisely because it denies the legitimacy of embracing such a direction in order to defend an isolated conception of individual liberty, the role of the lawyer is simply to advocate for the legitimacy of whatever the client wants or does (so long as it is not a crime). Legal education is almost exclusively directed toward teaching students the analytical techniques of rule-manipulation; the best students are those who can demonstrate their capacity to argue for any side irrespective of moral consequences. No part of a law student's education is directed toward instilling in the student the obligation or the capability to promote the creation of a more loving, more spiritually whole society. And once in practice, the lawyer's professional "duty of zealous representation" virtually requires the lawyer not to allow his or her own "private" ethical concerns to interfere with the zealous pursuit of the

client's ends, irrespective of the impact of these ends on others, on the society as a whole, or on the environment. Because the individualistic, materialist, and adversarial character of this legal culture is "binding" on the consciousness of society—because its assumptions about who human beings are and how we ought to relate to one another are also The Law—we cannot overcome the spiritual alienation that is at the heart of our own and the world's suffering without a fundamental transformation of this culture. And because the great social movements of the twentieth century did not grasp this, they foundered when they entered the legal arena. The labor movement, the civil rights movement, and the women's movement, for example, were fundamentally spiritual movements aspiring to a new kind of connection that would realize our common humanity—even the word "movement" denotes the spiritual emergence of just such a vitalizing connection. But once these movements began to translate their spiritual aspirations into a demand for legal rights, their very victories became a cause of the defeat of these aspirations. Absorbed into the law's individualistic and materialist framework, the labor movement's aspiration to a classless society based on solidarity and universal brotherhood became the right to bargain for higher wages and safer working conditions; the civil rights movement's aspiration to love across our racial differences became the right of "the individual" not to be discriminated against on the basis of race in order to protect his or her liberty to pursue "equality of opportunity" in the marketplace; the aspiration of the women's movement to replace a world of power, hierarchy, and heartless rationality with a communal, intuitively grounded fabric of care became the right not to have one's liberty to pursue material success in the marketplace impeded by gender. No matter how important these liberal victories were, they required looking in a mirror that made the spiritual aspiration for a fundamental social transformation invisible.

Yet for a complex of reasons—the most important of which are probably the failure of the liberal global marketplace to create a meaningful social existence, and the failure of the movements for social transformation to be able to sustain themselves through either the liberal or the materialist-socialist framework—a new flower has begun to sprout across the face of the world. This flower is the world-wide spiritual/ecological movement that is finally helping the necessity of love to *recognize itself* as the spiritual force that unites us. To bring this recognition to fruition, to enable this flower to grow in spite of the centuries of alienation and mistrust and "misrecognition" that have preceded its birth into awareness, we must create a new legal culture. And we are already beginning to do so.

Love Correcting That Which Revolts Against Love

A legal culture that can begin to realize Dr. King's great description of justice is one in which the community's response to conflict of every kind—civil and criminal to use the current categories—begins with a moral awareness of the love, the sense of compassionate and caring social connection, that is to be restored through the legal process. This requires that law's primary focus no longer be judgment directed toward divided individuals, but the healing of wounds to the connection that is to be restored.

This in turn requires that the three principal elements of the individualistic and materialist legal culture undergo the following transformation:

1. The adversary system should be abolished and replaced by processes that encourage empathy, compassion, and mutual understanding. Each human and ecological problem that requires community resolution should proceed by locating the presentation of all "facts" within a context of *social meaning* that reveals their ethical significance. Within this transformed framework, the courtroom would be the public space devoted to healing the spiritual wounds of alienation by allowing the community to hear these wounds in their full human dimension, instead of restricting what constitutes "evidence" to intentionally despiritualized "facts." For example, imagine the effect of a single public hearing of a case of racial oppression in such a setting. Imagine if the community and the perpetrator listened with a legally validated compassion to the suffering of the victim, and then with equal compassion to the desperate allegiance of the perpetrator to whatever distorted vision of racial superiority and false communal identity led him or her to inflict humiliation and pain on another (for listening with compassion does not mean sparing the offender of moral responsibility). And imagine the healing effect on the wider culture of watching such spiritual truths revealed on television—in contrast, say, to the alienating effect of watching the manipulations of the O.J. Simpson trial. The effect of a single such act of collective witnessing would have an immense impact by giving communal recognition, through a public legal process, to the pain of separation that pervades all of our lives and produces our worst distortions.

If you find it difficult to imagine how we could arrive at such a transformed vision of law's purpose and process, consider the rapid spread of the Restorative Justice movement in criminal law in America today. All across the country (but especially in Austin, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis), concerned lawyers, religious leaders, and community members are seeking to heal the community wounds caused by crime by creating safe contexts for victims to confront those who have hurt them with the full expression of the pain they have suffered, by allowing the perpetrators to come face to face with *the reality of the Other* that such a confrontation permits, and by sometimes eliciting sincere

apologies and the sincere forgiveness that is the only true way to repair the spiritual harm of violence. Of course these restorative justice processes also require the offender to provide appropriate and meaningful restitution to the victim where possible—such as requiring, in one case, two teenagers who had defiled a Des Moines synagogue with swastikas to remove the offending symbols, perform other community service, and study Jewish history in addition to coming to understand, through face-to-face encounters with Holocaust survivors who were members of the synagogue, the enormity of the suffering associated with the swastika. But the essential point of Restorative Justice is responding to crime in a manner consonant with love correcting that which revolts against love, with understanding crime as a wound to love that is itself almost always caused by such a wound that preceded the criminal act.

The power of this re-imagining of the healing power of law has been nowhere better revealed than in the work of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) under the leadership of Bishop Desmond Tutu. That commission has sought to avoid the vengeance that almost inevitably accompanies revolutions against a legacy of oppression by seeking, on behalf of the black majority, to forgive the white minority for the crimes of apartheid so long as the offenders acknowledged the truth of what they had done. With all its limitations, including the immense political complications accompanying the TRC's work (hearing and televising a review of some 22,000 cases often involving extreme violence), the TRC is one of the greatest experiments in human history in a spiritual approach to healing social conflict. Imagine if we began now to take the next millennium to build our entire legal culture on the TRC's premise announced in the title of Bishop Tutu's recent book: *No Future Without Forgiveness*.

2. The role of "rules" in resolving disputes in civil cases should be greatly diminished, in favor of wisdom guided by ethical and spiritual ideals. Just as the Restorative Justice movement has sought to foster the healing of the effects of violence on individuals and communities in criminal cases, the process of resolving civil disputes should draw upon the healing-centered focus of today's transformative mediation movement to assist in the realization of these spiritual and ethical ideals.

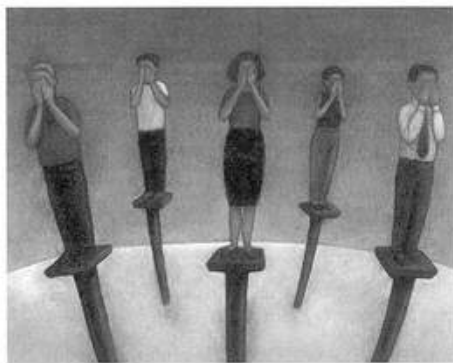
The importance of this shift can best be understood by grasping the changes in legal culture that will have to occur for David Korten's visionary conception of a post-corporate, sustainable economy to actually come into being. Korten's alternative to globalization calls for the creation of "mindful markets" that will be based on such ethical values as true mutuality and cooperation, respect for the meaningfulness of one another's labor, the production of material goods that satisfy real human needs in a manner that respects the sacredness of the earth, and respect by economic actors for the integrity of each other's local cultures.

But the only way to bring about such an economic transformation is to build a parallel legal culture that gradually helps to develop acceptance of these values as expressive of a *just* economy, and to fill out the practical meaning of these ideal values through the resolution of individual cases over time—through a spiritual/ethical equivalent of our present individualist/materialist common law.

What this new legal culture requires is not a new set of abstract rules to be applied neutrally and logically to strangers who want to remain strangers, but a legal process that emphasizes empathic listening and the elicitation of the social meaning of an economic exchange in order to gradually overcome the legacy of capitalist self-interest that presupposes disconnection between the parties. The purpose of the legal proceeding must be to bring into being a *connection* expressive of Korten's vision of an ethical and sustainable economic culture. If a dispute develops between a buyer of coffee in the United States and a supplier from Central America, the legal resolution of the dispute should perhaps begin with a period of meditation and a sharing of food and music, followed by a telling of respective stories and a period of questioning (not "cross-examination") aimed at resolving the dispute in accordance with the aspiration to a spiritual and ethical ideal. The aspiration to respect the inherent worth and meaningfulness of each other's labor cannot be realized by a verbal statement of this ideal in the form of a "rule" to which alienated actors must conform their conduct, but by a process that realizes this aspiration is an ideal "in front of us" that must be nurtured into existence through empathy, education, and reciprocal sensitivity.

Accompanying the replacement of rules with ideals in substantive law must be the development of spiritual remedies for the resolution of differences. In today's legal culture, the measure of all things is money. Consistent with the law's emphasis on material self-interest and the profit motive as the driving force of humankind, the legal remedy prescribed for almost every injury, whether economic (such as breach of contract) or non-economic (such as sexual harassment) is monetary damages to be transferred from one disconnected stranger to another. In the civil area as in the criminal area, remedies aimed at creating social connection must emphasize acknowledgment of wrong-doing and the elicitation of genuinely voluntary apology and forgiveness. Of course some and perhaps many cases will require some material restitution for material loss unjustly suffered by one party, but even here the aim wherever possible should be the promotion of future material assistance freely given, rather than just the payment of money.

Finally, while I have here emphasized re-imagining the relationship between a new legal culture and a new economic culture, the same re-imagining should occur in the non-eco-



omic sphere of a reconceived civil society that aspires to connect us rather than separate us. To take but the most obvious example, the present rule of American tort law that there is no duty to attempt to rescue someone in distress—for example, someone drowning in front of you in a swimming pool—

should be replaced by the ideal expectation that we will do all we can to rescue each other from isolation, fear, and danger, whether someone is drowning or someone is homeless. That we today associate this expectation as "making sense" only in relation to intimate family members is but a result of our conditioning that transforms those outside the tiny circle of blood relations into mere strangers, mere vessels of anonymity to whom we are not essentially related.

3. The role of lawyers must be equally reconceived as a "calling" rather than a trade. Instead of lawyers understanding themselves as neutral legitimators of their clients' individual self-interest, lawyers must reconceive of themselves as healers—that is, as spiritual actors whose aim is to reconcile the goals of their clients with the creation of a loving world. No longer should the ethics of the profession encourage the criminal defense lawyer to seek the acquittal of those whom the lawyer knows has committed violent acts, or encourage the lawyer for a lumber company to help his or her client destroy old-growth Redwoods with impunity. Instead, the lawyer should be trained from the first day in law school to engage every human situation with which he or she is confronted so as to create a better, more spiritually connected world. Rule-manipulation and the cultivation of cleverness should give way, through the study not of "cases" but of ethically compelling and challenging situations, to empathic engagement with both one's client's deepest hopes and the reconciliation of those hopes with the law's substantive ethical ideals. The purpose of the profession as a whole, therefore, should be the deepening of the collective moral consciousness of the community as a whole, as the community—finally facing the inevitability of the destruction of its own species if it cannot overcome the fear of the Other that has come to dominate its existence—approaches Martin Luther King Jr.'s simple and universally desired moral truth.

Whether this vision sounds hopelessly utopian to you or fully realizable and even necessary—whether you believe such a profoundly connected vision of law and legal culture cannot be accomplished without unacceptable threats to individual freedom, or, on the other hand, whether you believe such a vision of legally recognized spiritual connection is essential to the fulfillment of individual liberation—depends upon whether you really can embrace Martin Luther King Jr.'s affirmation that loving connection made manifest in the world will be but the realization of who we already are. I can embrace this. And with Dr. King and John Lennon in my mind's eye, I know I'm not the only one. □

Humanizing Globalization

A Report on the State of the World Forum 2000

Charles Michael Burack

During the first week of September an inspiring group of leaders met at the State of the World Forum in New York City to discuss ways of "Shaping Globalization." What was so remarkable about this conference was the general consensus among leaders in politics, business, science, technology, religion and social services that the world community needs to ensure that globalization is governed by moral and spiritual values, not just political and economic ones.

The convening chair of the conference, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, set the stage by calling for the establishment of a global citizens' council that would bring together leaders of civic society to help understand and shape globalization, rather than just allow "spontaneous change."

Gorbachev emphasized that globalization has been "privatized by a few countries and by a few people in those countries." The "positive benefits are mostly to the advanced nations and international corporations" and "the gap between the rich and the poor has increased." He also advocated reforming the United Nations, proposing that there be an "economic security council" as well as a stronger environmental focus. He and other leaders insisted that nuclear disarmament is necessary for creating a sustainable world peace.

Dr. James Garrison, chair and president of the State of the World Forum, also passionately called for an alliance of nation states, corporations, and civil society, which together would ensure a balance of "security, prosperity, and ethics." Similarly, George Soros, a leading advocate of globalization and open society, encouraged civil society to create and strengthen international organizations that "safeguard freedom and universal values" because the "unholy alliance" between government and business is "the greatest threat to

freedom and democracy." He insisted that "market fundamentalists are only half right": the free market benefits private but not public interests and "values winning, not protecting competition."

Several leaders called for reformation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, and the

International Monetary Fund. Soros proposed that the WTO institute labor and environmental standards and rules, and John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, argued for "core worker rights" and "a global, decentralized democratic movement." Gary Sampson, former director of the WTO, countered that the WTO has been doing a good job. He disagreed that trade was damaging the environment, and blamed the damage on "inappropriate production and consumption patterns."

In contrast, Dr. Vandana Shiva, Director of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and National Research Policy in India, argued that globalization has "wiped out" the interests of "women, nonwhites and non-Northern countries," and destroyed "local economies."

One powerful humanizing response to globalization was initiated by Dr. Muhammad Yunus. He founded the Grameen Bank to make microloans to impoverished but hard-working Bangladeshis who had been excluded from the credit system. These loans enabled starving citizens to free themselves from oppressive employers and develop economic independence. The new lenders showed they were incredibly creditworthy: in the first years of the lending program, 100 percent of the lenders paid back their loans on schedule! Today, the vast majority of these lenders are women. Women have proven to make the best use of their profits, putting aside money for the education and healthcare of their children.

A successful joint venture, called "Equal Access," was recently formed to build global learning networks and sustainable communities. The partnership brings together the satellite technology of World Space Corporation, founded by Noah Samara of Ethiopia; the solar power

George Soros admitted that the "unholy alliance" between government and business is "the greatest threat to freedom and democracy."

Charles Burack, Ph.D., is founder of Work Visions and the Center for Sacred Arts and a core faculty member at Naropa University in Oakland, California. He also teaches at the University of Creation Spirituality.

technology of Solaria, founded by Leslie Danziger of San Francisco; and the informational resources of the State of the World Forum in order to "bridge the digital divide." Equal Access has satellites that reach Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Inexpensive, portable, solar-powered receivers, capable of receiving multimedia educational programming, are being placed in villages and classrooms on all three continents.

The International Space Sciences Organization, founded by Joseph Firmage, teamed up with the John Templeton Foundation to sponsor a series of dialogues between scientists and religious leaders. Topics included: "The Moral

Nature of the Universe," "Physics, Metaphysics and God," and "Ethics at the Frontier of Science and Technology." One of the most inspiring speakers was President K. H. Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia, who discussed "Spiritual Insight and Political Responsibility." Wahid, a Muslim, emphasized the need to "honor eternal truth and respect other traditions." He said that there is a "tension between the universal declaration of human rights and formal Islamic law" and that today's Muslims are "forced to live according to the reality which may be different from the traditional laws": they can't kill someone for "apostasy." Further, "in order to make our minds peaceful we cannot

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[strictly] follow the formal Islamic law." Defining spirituality as "our ability to transform ourselves to accept our reality as it is without losing our faith," he insisted that it is a Muslim leader's "religious duty" to "decide for the welfare of the people" because "the state belongs to all the citizens.... The Government is only to serve the people" and "should be accountable to the citizens through election." Moreover, Muslim leaders have "the obligation to defend the interests of the citizens, not the state itself."

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Professor of Religious Studies at Naropa University, Boulder, Colorado, and one of the founders of the Jewish Renewal movement, also argued for greater religious openness and change. He said that "all traditional religious systems are embedded in reality maps that are now obsolete" and that we need to "embed them in new cosmologies" that are not based on outmoded "hierarchies and xenophobia." This means getting into "the system files of the mind" and "changing the BIOS." He advocated a "globalization of religion" in which religions would share their spiritual "laboratories" and discoveries: we would all "become parallel processors and spiritual peeping Toms." While emphasizing that "every tradition is a vital organ of the planet," he insisted that "the only way to get it together is together." He dispelled the idea that there are pure tribal and traditional lineages: we are all "hyphenated beings," and all religions are "hybrids." Turning to education, Schachter-Shalomi said we "need schools to make bodhisattvas [enlightened beings] and lamedvavniks [righteous ones] and saints." He proposed that we "socialize methods of meditation and make it [meditation] interactive" as well as create "portals to the inner net [spiritual awareness] that can be opened twenty minutes each day." We have to find ways to "make prayer fun and to awaken affect—the limbic brain." "If you don't feel safe, the dinosaur comes out; if you don't feel happy, then you're not awake," he added. He closed by referring to those in the audience as "fellow God recruits" and "Messiahs."

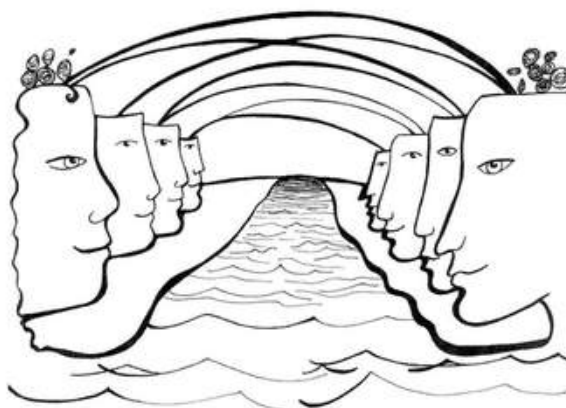
John O'Sullivan, editor-in-chief of United Press International, discussed how often the media misunderstands, misrepresents, or fails to recognize religious issues or the religious dimensions of political issues and events. Indeed, the majority of the media elite rarely attend church or synagogue, and "newsrooms are hostile to overt expressions of religiosity." He said we need more than religion editors: we need journalists who are informed about and

"sympathetic to religion" and who "examine the news from a religious perspective."

The noted sociologist Dr. Peter Berger of Boston University added that the old secularization theory of modernity is wrong. Modernization has not secularized the world; rather, we live in a "turbulently religious world with islands of secularity." These islands are mainly in America and Western Europe and among college-educated individuals who have studied the humanities and social sciences. He identified two dynamic global religious movements: "globalizing Islam," which has many different faces and is not mainly about fundamentalism; and "globalizing Evangelicalism," especially Pentecostalism. Evangelicalism is widespread in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and subSaharan Africa. In South America, it is mostly a women's movement. Throughout the world, there are renaissance movements in every major religion.

A traditional Iroquois long house was built in one of the conference rooms by the Worldwide Indigenous Science Network, founded by Dr. Apela Colorado. Next to the long house, which was surrounded by live trees, a traditional Hawaiian awa (kava kava) prayer service was led each day by the elder and kahuna (keeper of the secret), Hale Kahuna. Most mornings, a council of youth leaders from around the world met in the ceremonial room to develop their visions and leadership skills. At the conference's opening session, Colorado offered a powerful prayer reminding the participants that the conference was being held on the land of her ancestors, and that her people—the Oneida, one of the Five Nations—were one of the first in history to champion democratic values. Indeed, the Founding Fathers were inspired by the nearly two-thousand-year-old Great Law of Peace that ensured harmony among the five Iroquois nations.

While many conference participants believed that the democratization of information and communication technologies could bring great benefits to citizens worldwide, some, like myself, were concerned that a global Information Age could blunt our more subtle, intuitive powers and devalue more holistic forms of knowledge and wisdom. Yet I was heartened that each morning at 7 AM several hundred participants came to the hour-long meditation led by various spiritual luminaries. These meditations reminded us—and the world—of the need to ground our visions, decisions, and actions in the deep silence of love, compassion, insight, and peace. Only if we heed the inner voice of peace will we be able to build together a just and sustainable world peace. □



The Oughts

The Face of the New Left

Jo Ellen Green Kaiser

Has the year 2000 marked the decline and fall of American progressivism or its resurgence? By conventional measurements, progressives have been nearly invisible in the halls of power. Despite a few populist pieties voiced at their national convention, the Democrats have aligned themselves firmly with the political center. Public policy has been defined in terms that leave progressives out. On the stump, candidates no longer question the need for welfare reform, only how that reform is to be conducted. "Free trade" seems a *fait accompli*. Affirmative action seems dead. The presidential elections have come down to a choice between conservative Republican George W. Bush and Republican Al Gore, with Ralph Nader struggling to reach the 5 percent necessary to put the Green party in the running next time around.

Yet the year 2000 has also marked the resurgence of mass protests, starting with Seattle and continuing through the Summer of the Street, with marches in Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and this fall in Prague. How can a year with this much grassroots activism be considered a disappointment for progressives? Why haven't progressive media outlets taken these protesters seriously?

The simple answer is that the paradigm has changed. Today's street protesters do not believe in Sixties' values or practice Sixties' tactics. There has been a massive and important shift in priorities and focus between these generations of progressives, a shift from rights to responsibilities.

The Sixties generation fought for rights—civil rights, women's rights, the right of eighteen-year-olds to vote (and thus have a say in ending the war in Vietnam). They voiced the dissatisfaction of young people coming of age in a materialist, ostensibly homogenous society that told them to ignore or suppress differences and to stay in line. In contrast, the Boomers imagined a new society, united not by coerced homogeneity, but by a love that could encompass and transcend all differences. They sought a utopia for themselves and for their country.

Perhaps the new generation should be named the Oughts, after their time, the year '00, and their attitude. The "Oughts" grew up in the Reagan era when all around them the talk was about morality, values, and responsibility—yet



they saw that actions did not match words. Instead of a society in which money from the rich "trickled down" to the poor, they saw the rich getting richer. Instead of a society in which you were expected to stand up for your beliefs, they saw a president who constantly "forgot" what he had said and political operatives like Ollie North who minimized the extent of their actions in order to avoid jail time. They were persuaded by the Reagan message about values, yet saw that the Reagan government was not following the values it espoused. And there seemed no way to influence that government. Electoral offices increasingly seemed to be bought and sold by corporate America; meanwhile, the political movement of their elders, the generation of the Sixties, was breaking apart.

The Sixties movement was one of the most effective protest movements in our nation's history. These activists ended the war in Vietnam, abolished Jim Crow, and established the right of women to work alongside men in all spheres. Yet the movement's dual emphasis on individual rights and communal utopia contributed to its breakdown. When protesters were asked to put their personal rights aside for a communal vision (as when women were asked to cease their feminist demands and instead put all their energy into the anti-war effort) they felt they were back where they had started and began splintering off into identity groups. When these identity groups demanded to be heard, the utopians felt such particularists were snubbing the goal of a unified community based in love. The movement for rights devolved into a movement for identity politics.

Ironically, this focus on identity politics was easily integrated into mainstream politics, which has always catered to

special interests. So even as the big vision was disappearing, Boomers were finding that particular rights could be won within the umbrella of the Democratic party. The Eighties, especially, witnessed the absorption of identity politics into Democratic politics, as Chicanos, African Americans, American Indians, women, gays, lesbians, and the disabled made gains in representation and sometimes in policy. That very integration into the system has now left Sixties leaders like Jesse Jackson hamstrung and tongue-tied in the face of the new centrist alignment of the Democratic party (and the new outreach to identity groups by the Republicans). According to identity-politics ideology, the recent Democratic National Convention was probably the most diverse ever, yet those diverse delegates cheered for a platform that reversed many of the gains the Sixties activists had made and endorsed the sort of pro-corporate ideology the Sixties activists abhorred.

Anyway, the real action for progressives this summer happened outside of the Democratic National Convention. The Shadow Convention organized by populist Arianna Huffington and the street protests organized by grassroots activists gave the interested observer a fairly clear indication of where the Left has been and where it is going. Where the Shadow Convention was filled with Sixties stalwarts, the streets were filled with twenty year olds. The speakers at the Shadow Convention, in other years, would have been Democratic Convention delegates; the speakers at the street protests are not yet on anyone's political map. Most of all, however, the contrast between these two venues highlighted the differences between a paradigm based on a rhetoric of rights and one based on the rhetoric of responsibility.

Many of the Shadow Convention speakers, especially those associated with mainstream politics, framed the collapse of their vision in terms of the corporate hijacking of the political process. Gary Hart opened the convention by arguing that with the influx of corporate spending on elections, "We have permitted our sovereignty to be taken from us, have permitted the legalization of corruption." Russ Feingold remarked that what we have is "not a system of one person, one vote, but of one million dollars, one million votes." Paul Wellstone argued that American citizens should not have to "pay to play." These speakers demanded an end to such corruption in order to restore a program of rights. Gary Hart put it most clearly: we want, he said, "the price of rights, not the price is right." For the most part, the word at the Shadow Convention was this: we Boomers were pursuing the right path, we fell or were pushed off the path, we must find our way back.

The street protesters also focused on campaign finance reform, but came at it from a much different perspective. At 4:00 PM on Monday, August 14, as more than 7,000 protesters filled Pershing Square, the average age was twenty-one. The protesters were organized by affinity groups—the Greens wearing their green t-shirts, Native American

activists carrying puppets and banners, Rainforest Action Network and other eco-activists holding banners and signs, the Socialists distributing their various publications, MEChA (the Chicano/a student movement of Aztlán) activists wearing red and white t-shirts, the anarchists dressed in all black with bandannas over their faces, alongside the less-organized but no less present labor activists, feminists, pro-animal activists, and hundreds of others.

Unlike Sixties-style demonstrators, these young people made no pretense of unity. Instead, the demonstrations were split into smaller marches focused on specifics that appealed only to some of the protesters (like a march for better public school education) and mass marches held under the aegis of the few umbrella themes into which almost all the protesters could fit their views. These themes were essentially the same as those featured at the Shadow Convention, but they were expressed in different terms. Instead of focusing on the war against drugs and the right of Americans to use marijuana, the street protesters marched for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the end of the prison-industrial complex. Instead of focusing on domestic economic policy, the street protesters called for an end to corporate globalization. Instead of focusing on getting citizens a voice through campaign finance reform, the street protesters took to the street in an attempt to make sure their voices would be heard.

None of the street protesters I talked with were marching in order to obtain some right for themselves; unlike many Sixties demonstrators, the Oughts are not protesting because they feel that they themselves, as individuals, have suffered from the policies of our government. Instead, they feel frustrated that they must stand idly by while their government, which claims to represent them, enacts policy decisions that they find abhorrent. They cannot protest through the ballot box, because neither of the major party candidates—the candidates most likely to win—reflects their views. Yet they still feel personally responsible for government actions—feel it is up to them to give the disenfranchised a "voice." For example, when asked why she marched, Camina Flores said, "I'm here because there are other people who don't have a voice, people who cannot be here, and for the environment." Ed (who would not give his last name) marched "for reassurance that there are other people like me who do not like the state we are in in this country and in the world in general." Chela del Gato marched "because the global economy is a global atrocity. The WTO, World Bank, and IMF have more control in developing countries than the governments of those countries do, but they are not helping the working classes there; they are helping the people who are already rich."

Georgia Lopez, one of the organizers of the MEChA group, came to protest Al Gore's involvement with Occidental Oil, which is attempting to drill on land sacred

(continued on page 50)

THE OUGHTS (continued from page 20)

to the U'wa people. But she said her group was also there to protest U.S. immigration policy, the continued bombing of Iraq, the hypocrisy of "this supposedly two-party system," and U.S. environmental policy. The Oughts have been derided by their critics for precisely this inclusive—critics might say "grab-bag"—approach to public policy. How are all these issues tied together? In each case, Lopez said, "the government feels enabled or empowered to make decisions without getting any feedback from the society." In short, she felt left out of decisions in which she believed she should be a participant.

Because the focus of the protesters is on their responsibilities, rather than on their rights, they see no problem gathering with others who may have different issues than their own. Rights arguments tend towards exclusivity, raising the possibility that your right will impinge on mine (think of the case of affirmative action, for example). An argument for responsibility, however, tends to be all-inclusive. Taking on one set of responsibilities will not exclude another set, though I may need to prioritize one at a time to fulfill my obligations. Such non-exclusivity is especially the case when priorities are not being set by money, which is in scarce supply for all these groups, but by individual determination. Unlike the Sixties activists who needed to posit a unified community in order to contain and channel the sometimes contradictory claims to rights those activists made, the responsibility-based protesters of this new century can function quite well by working under an umbrella of affinity groups.

The events in Los Angeles confirmed that the torch of protest has passed from the Sixties to a new generation of activists. This would seem to be good news. Yet there was a disturbing lack of connection between these old and new activists, signaled by the stark geography of their different spaces—the kids on the streets to the southeast of the convention center, the Shadow Convention in a hall on the northeast of the center, divided by blocks of concrete barriers, barbed wire, and police.

This separation was the more unsettling because each group has much to learn from the other. The Sixties movement attempted to present a unified front and failed when it fragmented into diverse interest and identity groups in the Seventies. The new movement has taken that diversity as its strength, building its protest on the basis of "affinity" rather than agreement. One movement was modern, one is post-modern. Yet, as academic theorists of postmodernism have begun to realize over the past decade, it is very difficult to address global issues from a fragmented base. Throughout this year, protesters have had difficulty transmitting their

message to a larger public precisely because they have no spokespeople, no formal focus or goal.

The protest against Mumia's imprisonment drew at least 3,500 marchers. The anti-globalization protest Monday afternoon drew at least 5,000, while the mass demonstration Monday night hit at least 7,000. These are large numbers. However, even with these numbers, even with the excessive police force used to break up the Monday night demonstration, the simple fact that the protests were happening was absent from many prime-time news shows and made only

the back pages of most national newspapers. As Naomi Klein has pointed out in *The Nation*, a protest with a clearer, if not more unified, voice and with defined spokespeople might have made a greater dent in the media consciousness. I know I was struck—and puzzled—by the fact that speakers on the

The events in Los Angeles confirmed that the torch of protest has passed from the Sixties to a new generation of activists.

main stage at Pershing Square mainly performed street theater rather than trying to unify and motivate the crowd.

Similarly, the police attack on the protesters the first night of the convention was the result, all agree, of the provocation of one affinity group, the anarchists. Because all affinity groups were considered equal in these marches, the other groups did not know how to handle the situation or how to separate themselves from the anarchists. That knowledge, however, exists: models are already in place for the kind of affinity organizing the Oughts want. In the Eighties, for example, the gay rights movement, which at the time functioned as a grassroots-based, affinity-style organization, learned the hard way how to disentangle itself from the pedophilic National Man-Boy Love Association (NAM-BLA). The Oughts have mastered the tactics of protest, but their strategy is missing.

Meanwhile, back in the Shadow Convention, there is a hall filled with strategists who are too integrated with the establishment, or too busy with their foundations, or too tired of all the infighting in their various camps, to take to the streets. But they know how to manage a campaign; they know how to focus on a message, use the media, organize groups over a large geographical area.

What would happen if the legislators and publishers and organization founders made their way back to the streets, to hear the message of this new generation, to see how their legislative priorities have been radicalized into a larger call to arms—to see, most of all, that their work continues, albeit in a new way? What would happen if the street protesters invited their elders in, not to take over their marches but to advise them on strategy, to share their history, to rally the troops? It's too common an American theme to leave the past behind. Why can't we, for once, embrace our past even as we move forward into our future? □

Why Your Vote Matters

Michael Tomasky

In early 1985, I was a low-level functionary for a low-level Democratic member of Congress. Correspondence, casework, that sort of thing. One day, amid the usual processing of constituents' Social Security requests, a call was routed to me from a union man back in the district with the following complaint. It seemed an agency of the federal government, the Department of Energy if I remember it right, was constructing some sort of building in the congressman's district. The contract for the project had been awarded to a local construction firm, and my caller explained that this firm was not paying the men on the job what the bureaucrats call "prevailing wage," i.e., union scale, as federal regulations required on federal building projects. Furthermore, no benefits, breaks, and so on. The union man asked: Can you fix this?

I had no idea if I could or could not, but in due course I called the Department of Labor—Ronald Reagan's Department of Labor—and started asking around. No, sorry, not our division. No, different department. Well, these things have to be carefully documented; what's the proof? How long's the project due to last? This sort of thing can take a while, son.

I might have, at that point, skipped it and gone off to drink beer at a Capitol Hill watering hole with my friends, which was pretty much my chief interest in life at the time. But now my dander was up, and my curiosity piqued. I called a union fellow in the district whom I knew. Why was this so hard? Wasn't this sort of thing the Department of Labor's job? He laughed. In theory, sure, he said; but you'll be banging your head against the wall all week if you call cold to that bunch. You have to talk to so-and-so, he's the only person over there now who'll take care of this sort of thing. I called so-and-so, gave him the information. Within a week, the men were making prevailing wage.

I relate this little vignette not to the make the case for my good self as Caseworker of the Year. The point, instead, is this: So-and-so, you see, was a Carter administration hold-over with civil-service protection who the Reaganites could not budge from office. I had been talking to Reagan people. That episode, if not poor so-and-so's actual name, has stuck

Michael Tomasky is a political columnist at New York magazine. He is the author of Left for Dead and is currently at work on a book about the New York Senate race.



with me for fifteen years. And ever since, whenever anyone has tried to lecture me about the inadequacies of Michael Dukakis or Bill Clinton or, now, Al Gore, and about how voting Democratic is an act of corruption, I trot this episode out. It may not end the argument, but it does tend to force the lecturer to pause and reconsider.

No difference between the parties? People can be forgiven for believing there are none. Surely the debates of our time do not provide for great lines of ideological demarcation. Surely Bill Clinton forced the party to the center. Surely the Democratic Party of the 1990s has become a party also in hock—though by no means as in hock as the Republican Party—to corporate money. And, surely, Al Gore is very like Clinton on trade and welfare and the death penalty, his post-convention populism notwithstanding.

But forget all of that. Forget all of that, because, though it makes for delicious media fodder and so forth, comparatively little of it directly touches most Americans' actual lives, and think instead about this: what does the federal government actually do, on a day-to-day, week-to-week basis, out of view of the major media, that does touch most Americans' lives? I'll tell you what it does. It either enforces the Clean Air and Clean Water acts, or it does not. It either pursues consumer complaints vigorously, or it does not. It either makes businesses conform to OSHA standards concerning exposure to asbestos or dangerous chemicals, or it does not. It either investigates allegations that employees of a poultry factory in Mississippi are facing intimidation when they want to sign union cards, or it does not. It either provides reasonably adequate resources for the enforcement of civil rights laws, or it does not. And so on and so on, in every aspect of governance, and life. The media, and we who follow the media, tend to

focus on the laws a president and the Congress pass, and assume that once the law is passed the problem has been more or less addressed. In fact the opposite is true. A law is merely a suggestion. It's only after a law is passed that bureaucrats write its most specific provisions and decide exactly how it will be enforced, and that presidentially-appointed judges in administrative law issue rulings that interpret a law's scope and reach. And it's only in a department's budget line for the next fiscal year that the amount of money that will go toward enforcement is determined.

I ask you: which party's pencil pushers are far more likely to see after all these things? Forget Al Gore and however you feel about him. Al Gore will appoint cabinet secretaries, and they will appoint undersecretaries, and they will appoint tens of thousands of people, whose job it is to see that government does its job. The tens of thousands of people who get those jobs if Al Gore is president will be cut of a very different cloth

from the tens of thousands who will get them if George W. Bush is president. Every day, they will make decisions on local environmental problems, on whether a minority-owned firm should have won a government contract, on thousands of things. My brief career in government ended shortly after the prevailing-wage incident. But I have plenty of friends and acquaintances whose misfortune it is to fall into the maligned category of "Washington insider." To a person, they can offer many stories about how different the decisions emanating from this or that commission were during the Clinton years as opposed to the Bush years.

We will probably never hear about those decisions—the media don't cover these matters as a general rule and are interested in writing about bureaucrats only when they do something hideous that conforms with the accepted story line that bureaucracy equals red tape equals governmental incompetence. But that we may never hear about them doesn't change the fact that I, for one, know who I want making them.

So there is that difference, admittedly remote from most of us—the difference in the culture of Washington depending on which party's in charge. But there is another difference, more broadly cultural, that exists mostly outside Washington. The political parties are tribes. They represent loose confederations of people; they are houses in which different sorts of people can plop down on the couch and feel comfortable. The parties we see represented on television are awfully similar. As much as the world has changed in the last thirty years, chances are still reasonably good that the person speaking on television representing one party or the other will be a white male millionaire who's fifty-five or older. But that's only part of what the parties are. Can anyone honestly argue that, between

a party that gets 90 percent of black votes and 80 percent of Jewish votes and 75 percent of gay votes, and a party that gets 10 and 20 and 25 percent of those respective votes, there is no difference? Please. As organic collections of affectional communities, outside Washington and in America's cities and towns, the parties are almost as dissimilar as they could possibly be. Go to a local Democratic function wherever you live. Then go to a Republican one (I've gone to plenty of both). Pay attention not only to the skin colors, where the difference will be vast enough. Pay attention to the types of work the people do, the concerns they talk about, the clothes they wear,

even the kinds of jokes they tell. You'll see what I mean.

Now: Should this difference have any bearing on one's vote in a presidential election? It should indeed. Obviously, life will not immediately be all sunshine for blacks or Jews or gays if a Democrat wins the White House. But I would argue that they and other groups the Democratic Party more

closely represents—Latinos, union members, teachers, and others—will feel, however imprecisely, elevated. And they will feel elevated because the White House does radiate a cultural tone. It sends out little cues that the culture picks up. Drops little cultural rose petals across the national landscape, whose fragrance reaches us all in one way or another.

It always amused me, during the impeachment process, when I read some of Clinton's critics on the Left sounding dumbstruck—and not a little condescending—when they expressed mystification as to why African Americans were standing behind this man so solidly. Wasn't Clinton the person who condemned a brain-damaged black murderer to death during the primaries? Wasn't Clinton the president who signed the welfare bill? What were black people thinking? I believe they were thinking that, from their point of view, Bill Clinton was scarcely the enemy. And, I believe, many black Americans reached this conclusion not so much because of policy—although it was certainly important to blacks that he held his ground on affirmative action when the GOP was making noises about dismantling it—but because of who he was and the kinds of signals he sent out. Here was a president—probably the first in the country's history—who had actual black friends. He was comfortable around black people. He knew the words to "Lift Ev'ry Voice," the anthem that convokes black civic and religious gatherings all across America. Besides all that, black Americans understood better than the rest of us just how it felt to be lectured about one's sexual and moral lassitude in public (and yes, Clinton did some of this himself, but the Republicans, for years, did far more). The commentariat mocked Toni Morrison when she wrote in the *New Yorker* that Clinton was "the first black

(continued on page 51)

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ROUNDTABLE ON RELIGION IN POLITICS



*Stephen Carter, Barbara Ehrenreich, Stanley Fish,
Michael Sandel, Judith Schaeffer, and Nomi Stolzenberg*

TIKKUN: The role of religion in politics has become a hotly debated topic ever since vice-presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman began arguing that religion should have a more prominent place in public life. But there are dangers to having God brought into the public sphere, particularly as part of a partisan effort to give credit to a particular party or candidate. These relevant issues have been framed in an important new book by Stephen Carter entitled *God's Name in Vain: The Wrongs and Rights of Religion in Politics* (Basic Books, 2000). So perhaps Stephen Carter could begin this conversation.

Stephen Carter is a professor of law at Yale University. Barbara Ehrenreich is a freelance writer and journalist. Stanley Fish is Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Michael Sandel teaches political theory in the Department of Government at Harvard University. Judith Schaeffer is Deputy Legal Director of People For the American Way Foundation. Nomi Stolzenberg is a professor of law at USC Law School.

CARTER: I argue in *God's Name in Vain* that vigorous and spirited participation by religious citizens, along with everyone else, in the public sphere is very important for a democratic society. Religious citizens should feel invited to use whatever language is comfortable for them, particularly when addressing various issues of right or wrong that may divide us in considering public policy. I distinguish, however, between debates over policy, where this language is very important, and debates over elections and who should win. In the electoral sphere, I think we should be far more cautious. Whether it be religious figures endorsing candidates or candidates telling us about their religious beliefs, I think that there are terrible risks to religious integrity when we have clergy endorsing a person as God's candidate or a member of God's party.

I owe a debt to C.S. Lewis on this point. Over half a century ago he opposed the creation of a Christian political party on the grounds that a Christian party is an oxymoron. Either it would be entirely Christian, in which case no one would vote for it, or it would make all the compromises and

accommodations required in politics and therefore forfeit the name "Christian." In my book I talk about what happens to religious groups on both the Left and the Right when they see themselves not as a prophetic voice calling the nation to change from the outside but rather as a reliable building bloc in a religious coalition. At that point, the religious voice quickly ceases to be interestingly religious and ends up becoming another partisan voice without any particular reason to pay attention to it.

SCHAEFFER: It is certainly appropriate to know what animates a given candidate, and so a candidate should feel free to state his or her own religious beliefs. But there's a big difference between that and having a candidate exhort others to become believers or to suggest that the country needs a certain amount of faith or that Americans should be of a particular faith. Senator Lieberman's statements in August crossed that line. Bringing religion into public discourse in a way that says or implies that we are "a Christian nation," or "a Judeo-Christian nation," is singularly inappropriate for a public official to do.

FISH: The issue of religion and politics, however posed, is itself a political one. From the beginning of the Republic, the distinction between the religious and the secular has been ceaselessly invoked; where that distinction is drawn, and by whom, will determine whether a particular activity is appropriately secular or inappropriately religious. The line is being redrawn today in public life, with the secular part of life being challenged by Lieberman and others. Interpretive tactics are used to advance political agendas—something that is not unusual in American political life.

At the moment, the Democratic Party is attempting to seize an issue that has belonged to the Republicans in order to immunize the Gore/Lieberman campaign from certain kinds of attacks. They are grabbing what in politics is called "the moral high ground."

EHRENREICH: I take this issue a little personally. I'm an "out" atheist, though I don't like the term "atheist" because it seems to suggest that someone is defining her entire stance in opposition to organized religion. Although I'm fascinated by religion, I don't adhere to any, and I'm not convinced of the existence of some moral agency running the universe. You do have to feel left out as an atheist. I was startled when Stephen Carter said he supported vigorous participation by religious people in politics "as well as others." It's "the others" who don't get to participate. I can't think of any "out atheist" who has won any significant



political office—in fact, I think it would be almost impossible for an atheist to win such an office. I'm particularly disturbed and miffed by Lieberman's comment that "morality cannot be maintained without religion." That would mean that anyone who doesn't have a religion, or maybe even a religion he would approve of and call a religion, cannot be a moral person, and cannot be a full participant in the life of the nation.

SCHAEFFER: And he did embrace John Adams' statement that our Constitution was made "only for a moral and religious people." It's disturbing that a candidate for public office in the year 2000 would embrace such a sentiment, suggesting that those who aren't religious are second-class citizens, and that the Constitution doesn't protect them.

CARTER: John Adams was being Burkean when he said that, and the Burkean view is not that every person needs to be religious, nor that religious people are always more moral than nonreligious people, but rather that, on the whole, religion was the best stabilizer for moral opinions that has been found in human societies. That is a view which may be wrong, but it does

not exclude those who are not religious.

SCHAEFFER: Whatever Burke's views were, and most Americans today have no idea what they were, that's not what was conveyed by Senator Lieberman's statements.

SANDEL: In fairness to Lieberman, he later said he considers it possible to be a moral person without necessarily being religious. I don't think he meant to put it quite as sharply as it first came across.

STOLZENBERG: I think Barbara Ehrenreich is right in suggesting that an explicitly atheist person would find it hard to get elected. On the other hand, there's no reason why such a person would ever raise the issue of religion in a campaign. But another kind of religious expression is equally unlikely to take place as part of a political campaign: namely, a serious engagement with the religious ideas a candidate raises. My sense is that it would be perceived as a shocking breach of public etiquette if the media or public were to demand from candidates the reasons for the religious beliefs that they affirm in the same way that we might ask them to give reasons for their advocacy of certain policies. By looking at the kinds of language that are out of bounds, we can get a clearer sense of the religious talk that is allowed. What is allowed in contemporary political culture tends to be fairly broad, not particularistic, invocations of God or pronouncements that America is a religious nation—statements that are fairly platitudinous,

*Opportunistic politicians
use religious language
to legitimate a
competitive market
which itself encourages
values that religion has
sought to critique.*

not necessarily insincere, but basically aimed at certifying that "I'm your kind of guy, I too adhere to the conventional code of morality that prevails, and so you should elect me."

SANDEL: Unlike John F. Kennedy, who insisted in 1960 that religion is a purely private matter, Lieberman has argued that religious belief can have a public role. This seems to me entirely legitimate. It may be true that Lieberman's invocation of religion has not found concrete political expression in specific policies. For those who agree that religious argument should inform public debate, it is a further challenge to work out some of the reasons and arguments. One of the best examples of a closely-reasoned attempt to draw on religious themes was Mario Cuomo's speech at Notre Dame, when he tried to show that one could believe in the Catholic doctrine on abortion and still oppose laws banning abortion. That kind of detailed argument we haven't seen.

FISH: But perhaps Lieberman has done that. It seems to me that Lieberman's critique of violence in the media is related to his religious concerns. And this raises a very old question of political theory: is it the business of government merely to ensure that people in the society do not infringe on each other's rights, so that citizens are seen as stripped down equals who must be treated in the same way by government, or should government be an agency one of whose purposes is to create a better citizenry? It is when one holds this second view that the religious perspective takes on greater importance.

CARTER: I worry when a politician like Senator Lieberman takes religion from the prophetic role into the electoral role. He wants to talk about his faith, but he also has to recognize that there are limits on what he can safely say about his religious commitments without getting into electoral trouble. You start making calculations and trade-offs that are almost automatic when you are governed by electoral considerations, as opposed to keeping religion freer to speak its mind.

EHRENREICH: We as citizens have a right to know the political policy implications of a candidate's religious views—this cannot be totally private. Ronald Reagan thought Armageddon would come and that it was his business to get America ready for it. If we have another president like that, who thinks that Jesus' return to earth is waiting upon all the Jews going back to Israel, I want to know that.

CARTER: I agree with the relevance point, but I can also imagine that all kinds of Americans want to know whether the candidate accepts the Bible as the literally true word of God—that they are thinking, if he does not, he doesn't get



my vote. So there are considerable risks to saying we have a right to know.

STOLZENBERG: I'm struck by the fact that all of the last comments have addressed the question of whether the candidate's real or deep religious convictions should be "outed." Apparently, it's a winning strategy to invoke God and present oneself as a religious person, but it's not a winning strategy to give expression to serious religious ideas and their substantive implications for public policy. Candidates can't appear to be irreligious, but they can't seem too religious either. Why is it that candidates are almost compelled by the sentiments of the voting public to take this stance?

SCHAEFFER: It's because the religious right has virtually taken over the Republican party. The kinds of things we've heard Senator Lieberman say have been said in past years by many Republican candidates. It was disturbing for those who care about the separation of church and state to hear Lieberman say some of the things he said, including the religious right's sound bite: "The Constitution protects freedom of religion, not freedom from religion." This is a misleading characterization of the First Amendment, which protects every Amer-

ican from government pressure to belong to any religious faith or to hold any religious beliefs.

TIKKUN: In *TIKKUN*, and in Michael Lerner's book, *Spirit Matters: Global Healing and the Wisdom of the Soul*, a different analysis is put forward for why people today are much more receptive to religion or God in politics. We've argued that as the globalization of selfishness and materialism has accelerated and its effects have been more deeply experienced in the daily life experience of all of us, there has been a much wider sense of discontent in American society. This sense of discomfort goes beyond the traditional social democratic analysis with its focus on economic deprivation and the deprivation of the rights of oppressed groups. An increasing number of people have begun to experience a crisis in meaning, or a hunger for a framework of meaning that can transcend the competitive market and connect them to some higher purpose for their lives besides the endless accumulation of material possessions.

These are powerfully important developments, and they bespeak the importance of addressing the spiritual crisis of the contemporary world in a real way. What is so troubling about Lieberman and others in both mainstream parties who have been candidates for public office in the past thirty years is the way they shamelessly manipulate these legitimate needs. People positively associate religious and spiritual concerns

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with an alternative to the competitive market, yet opportunistic politicians use that religious language to advocate the very policies which deepen the hold of the competitive market and the globalization of materialism and selfishness.

FISH: We don't need to impose a sincerity requirement on anyone. Whether Lieberman believes in what he says or not should not be our concern, but the effect of his language, which may well be to support this yearning for some kind of coherence to a modern life which has seemed to many to be rather arid. If Lieberman and others, by using a religious discourse, bring that concern to greater public attention, we might support that language even though Lieberman himself, like most other politicians, might be using that language for the narrower reason that he shares with other politicians, namely his desire to win an election.

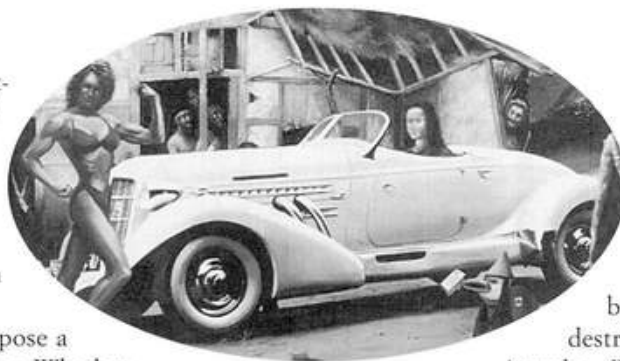
SANDEL: There are two reasons why the public culture is more hospitable to religious discourse. One is a bad reason: the advent of a confessional culture and the Oprah-fication of our public life. Hence the preoccupation with the private lives of public officials and the fascination with public confessions. This has seeped into politics in a pernicious way.

TIKKUN: But that may have happened precisely because people are no longer satisfied with a public life so devoid of moral categories and so absent of any sense of repentance.

SANDEL: There seems to me to be a good reason for this openness to religion as well: there is a yearning for larger public purposes, a realization that there is a kind of emptiness to purely managerial, procedural, secular understandings of the public realm. Unfortunately, the desire for a politics that addresses moral concerns too often slides into the confessionalism that afflicts the popular culture.

FISH: You might add to this the growing interest in New Age spirituality which avoids sectarian religious particularism and therefore has a greater appeal for people who wish to find some form of spiritual or religious solace in their lives, but who would be reluctant to adhere to fine points of doctrine.

EHRENREICH: I think you are all too high-minded and idealistic about it. Religion is not some discrete entity disconnected from everything else. In this country in the 1980s, so-called right-wing Christianity overlapped significantly with what we usually call nationalism. At this moment, Christianity seems to be merging with football—that's why the issue of prayer at football games is so hot.



A lot of people use the language of religion to say, "I fit in, I'm one of the group." And this is very dangerous to religion.

CARTER: A lot of people use the language of religion to say, "I fit in, I'm one of the group." And this is very dangerous to religion: because religion that makes us no different from who we would have been without it is actually very destructive to the basic religious impulse. What religions in America are increasingly failing to do is to arm their participants with the capacity to be at war with those aspects of the culture that conflict with the deepest values of their religious tradition. They are not giving people the strength to say: "Here I stand for something radically different from what the culture pushes."

TIKKUN raises the issue of materialism, and with it the attendant careerism that is so pervasive in this society. We act surprised when we find, as a recent survey did, that 70 percent of college students admit to having cheated on a test. Yet we shouldn't be surprised, because that is what we teach: that what really matters is getting the grades, getting the test results, getting the car, getting the big house, etc. And with some exceptions, most Americans who call themselves religious are participating in this rush toward material goodies just as hard as everybody else in the culture.

It strikes me that when politicians say, "I'm a religious person too, though my policies are actually aimed at advancing this materialistic, careerist battle further," it's not only a problem but a tragedy. It's a tragedy because as this happens, religion loses its capacity to be a voice criticizing the dominant materialism.

SANDEL: Most religious discourse in politics addresses cultural issues. We hear less about economic issues. There is much in the religious traditions that addresses the moral status of the market economy, but those aspects of religious sensibility are rarely raised by contemporary politicians. This is an area where the best thinking of the various religious communities could help reinvigorate American political discourse.

EHRENREICH: I would be interested in hearing some Christian say, "my policies will flow from the values in the Book of Matthew," or some Jew say, "my policies will flow from the Prophets." I might vote for them on that basis. But that's not the kind of morality that people are finding in the Bible. Instead they seem primarily interested in the details of our sexual behavior. To me, this represents not just a trivialization of religion, but a trivialization of morality.

FISH: There is a tradition of morality that allies itself with and finally supports a market capitalist valuing of materialism. It starts by valuing independence and individual autonomy, and sees prosperity as a sign that you are favored by God or by nature. Market values are a morality also.

SANDEL: I don't think that there is any single answer that religion as such gives with respect to economic questions or market economies. My suggestion is not that religion would provide us with a single answer about economics, but that having that debate would elevate the public discourse. There is very little substantive moral discourse in our politics these days about economic questions and this seems to be one way of fostering it. A work such as *The Jewish Political Tradition*, edited by Michael Walzer *et. al.*, tries to explore Jewish political theory in ways that might deepen our understanding of current economic issues. Another example is the Catholic Bishops' letters on the market economy and the welfare state. Both are examples of religious traditions mining their own moral resources and trying to bring them to bear on important public questions.

STOLZENBERG: The simple reason why we don't see this kind of discourse in politics is that, if Gore and Lieberman or Bush and Cheney were to talk this way, they would not be elected. It's an interesting question whether substantive moral discourse would be acceptable if used by other sorts of actors in the public realm like judges, legislators, or the public itself. Candidates, however, couldn't possibly get away with this more elevated discourse and still hope to get elected.

CARTER: And this is a good reason why we should be skeptical of the notion that we are learning anything deeply substantive about a candidate when we hear about their religious convictions. John F. Kennedy said he would resign if there were a real conflict between his faith and what he thought would be in the best interests of the country, but I don't think we hear anyone today raising this kind of issue, because politicians present themselves in ways that make it seem completely unlikely that such a conflict would ever arise.

TIKKUN: Since our beginning as a magazine sixteen years ago, TIKKUN has been advocating a politics of meaning which asserts that we ought to be seeking in the public realm a particular spiritual outcome, a new bottom line of love and caring. In fact, we ought to be seeking a new definition of productivity and efficiency and rationality primarily in terms of the degree to which any institution or social practice tends to maximize our capacity to be loving and caring, ethically



and ecologically sensitive, and capable of responding to the world and to other human being with awe and wonder and not only with a narrow utilitarian approach.

This spiritual politics, which is described in detail in *Spirit Matters*, is in fact a way to introduce spiritual ideas into politics that would never emerge from the framework of either the Left or the Right. This approach, which emerges from Torah and is hence rooted in a particular religious community, is shared by many in other religious communities and spiritual traditions. It challenges as inadequate a Left vision which tends to focus primarily on bringing those who have been left out of the material rewards of American society back into the market.

EHRENREICH: You made that lovely statement without any reference to a God. You didn't require that I share or accept some essentially unsharable religious epiphany you may have had. So we can do without God and still get the powerful social

vision that you are talking about that would be appropriate for the political realm. You don't need to invoke a deity, for example, to make a critique of the market economy—a deity who is completely hypothetical or imaginary to a lot of us.

SCHAEFFER: There is, of course, a problem when public officials not only invoke God to back up their vision and political beliefs, but characterize America as "a Christian nation" or, as Senator Lieberman virtually said, "a Judeo-Christian nation." That is wrong and divisive.

CARTER: I think there is a political bias inherent in the notion that it is inherently more biased to invoke God's

The voice of the prophet is more of what we need in public life than the voice of the political leader.

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name than not to invoke God's name. There are many people who find that what is most offensive about the public realm is that the name of God is absent—for them not to talk about God is extremely offensive, alienating, and divisive. There is no neutral answer when you focus on the issue of divisiveness or exclusion.

FISH: TIKKUN is asking us: what do we want to see in the public realm? And one answer, suggested in part by Barbara Ehrenreich, is this: "we need more moral discourse." Positions could be defended and elaborated in terms of "this is the right thing to do." The great moral/political crusade, the civil rights movement, won in part because of its centering itself on a moral discourse; it did not lose itself in the specifics of political policy questions.

CARTER: The voice of the prophet is more of what we need than the voice of the political leader. Fannie Lou Hamer never sought office or personal gain. Prophetic discourse is based on people who have a strong critical/moral voice and who are willing to stand outside the corridors of power and say "I'm not running for office and I'm not trying to support a particular candidate—I am raising issues of right or wrong that would benefit this society and I seek to inspire or bring you along." Some people will be inspired.

STOLZENBERG: I don't think what we need is more morality in public discourse, but rather a greater variety of views. The problem is created by the structure of our two-party system, which creates a very narrow band of positions that can be permissibly or safely expressed and still succeed in appealing to the majority of the voting public. Campaign finance reform, meaningful efforts to create a third or fourth party in politics—these are the kinds of moves that would have more of an impact in creating diversity, not only religious diversity but a wide variety of voices that are currently excluded from political discourse.

CARTER: We all have ideas that we'd rather were not expressed, but I don't advocate building a culture in which they were not expressible. I always worry about building a culture around a common language or civil virtue, because it always turns out that that is somebody's particular language or sense of virtue—from which others might reasonably dissent.

FISH: The search for civic virtue, and the debate around it, may be central to our American experience.

TIKKUN: Religious discourse is often kept out of public discourse because it is too radical. Instead, a weak religiosity takes its place—"I'm for God, I'm for religion" replaces



Religious discourse is often kept out of public discourse because it is too radical. The dumbing down of religion is the attempt to declaw the radical implications of an Emancipatory Spirituality.

the critical element that the insistence on the Unity of All Being, or in Jewish and Christian language, the value of human beings created in the image of God, might bring. The dumbing down of religion is the attempt to sanitize and declaw the far more radical implications of an Emancipatory Spirituality that insists on attending to the poor, the homeless, the widow, the orphan, the stranger in our midst. It is when this more radical vision gets articulated in God language that the media and other guardians of public discourse get worried about too much religion in the public sphere; when it gets articulated in the more universal language of a politics of meaning it gets ridiculed as New Agey or is otherwise dismissed as non-allowable public discourse.

STOLZENBERG: But it doesn't seem to me that religion is the critical wedge for bringing this kind of critical thinking into the public discourse. So the question of introducing more critical perspectives in politics seems to me totally separate from the question of a religious versus a secular way of articulating one's politics.

CARTER: I agree with what Nomi has just said. But it is striking to me how often in American history movements that have been radical on either the Left or the Right have been fired by religious language and perspectives.

TIKKUN: And that is not just an accident. The language of the Torah and of the religious tradition resists incorporation into the rhythms and logic of domination that is central to contemporary market societies. The challenge of Torah is that it does not measure good by the same standards as those infected by market rationality. And it remains the case that the major so-called radical movements of the past few hundred years in American society have been radical only in so far as they focused on who was included in a world that valued materialism and individual rights. Religious traditions challenge those values in the name of an orientation to the universe focused on awe and wonder at the glory of creation and the marvel of other human beings; they challenge the ego-focused and narcissistic approaches to our experience that are just as frequently found in left-wing as right-wing political movements. They offer a different rhythm of celebration and contemplation. It is these elements that make religious traditions an alternative to the celebration of the status quo that dominates most political parties, and makes so imperative the warnings that Stephen Carter shares with us about avoiding the misappropriation of religion for narrowly partisan and accommodationist political goals. □

Is the Jew in Vogue?

Andrew Furman

When Al Gore announced that he had chosen Senator Joseph Lieberman, an Orthodox Jew, to be his running-mate for the presidency, many pundits and lay-people presumed that Gore and his staffers selected Lieberman *in spite* of his identity as an Orthodox Jew, and that they would seek to mute his Orthodoxy to appeal to mainstream voters. Instead, the exact opposite appears to be the case. Lieberman, in what can only be carefully scripted fashion, generously peppers his speeches with Yiddishisms and rarely passes up the opportunity to praise the Lord. Maureen Dowd of the *New York Times* has even taken to calling him "Holy Joe."

Lieberman, to be sure, has a long political record and Gore assuredly chose him as his running mate based mainly upon this record. (Indeed, like many progressive Jewish Americans, my enthusiasm for Gore's selection of a Jewish running-mate was and is tempered by my concerns regarding Lieberman's rightward leanings on such issues as affirmative action, school vouchers, and censorship of the arts.) Still, the Democrats' unbridled enthusiasm for Lieberman's Orthodoxy suggests that they apparently believe that the Jew is in vogue. And, to a certain (and even embarrassing) extent, are counting on it in November.

• • •

In a 1940 essay, "When the Negro Was In Vogue," Langston Hughes cast a sardonic backward glance at the Harlem (or New Negro) Renaissance of the 1920s. While Hughes admittedly reveled in the burst of African-American creativity during this time that would leave its indelible mark on American literature, music, art, and dance, he also knew "that the gay and sparkling life of the so-called Negro Renaissance of the '20's was not so gay and sparkling beneath the surface as it looked." Indeed, he presciently glimpsed the exploitative nature of the mainstream (read: white) enthusiasm for and endorsement of African-American artistic expression.

Andrew Furman teaches at Florida Atlantic University and is the author of *Contemporary Jewish American Writers* and the *Multicultural Dilemma* (Syracuse, 2000).



What does all this mean to us today? Not, certainly, that all the art produced during the Harlem Renaissance was irredeemably tainted or corrupt. But Hughes's observations also crucially remind us that art—despite what those on the far right would have us believe—is never produced in a political or ideological vacuum. Rather, the artist strikes a note (in keys harmonious or discordant, or both) in the chorus that is the cultural conversation of its particular time and place. While this line of argument may smack of trendy "academese," there is nothing post-structuralist, post-colonialist, or post-everything about it. Even that crusty white sage from Concord, Ralph Waldo Emerson, argued in his essay "Art" that "No man can quite emancipate himself from his age and country.... Though he were never so original, never so wilful and fantastic, he cannot wipe out of his work every trace of the thoughts amidst which it grew."

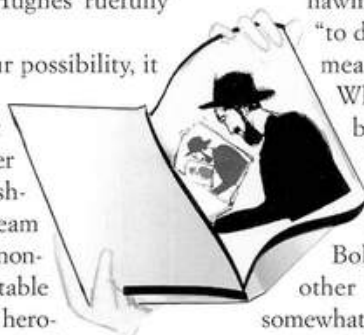
Hughes's careful examination of the corrupt external pressures that tainted some, if not most, African-American art during the 1920s has recurred to me as I've taught, read, and read about recent Jewish writers. I'm not the first who has noticed how many of them evoke Jewish Orthodoxy. It's safe to say, I believe, that Orthodoxy has never been as intensely imagined by Jewish fiction writers as it has been in the past few years. The most prominent of these works include Pearl Abraham's *The Romance Reader* (1995), Allegra Goodman's *Kaaterskill Falls* (1998), Nathan Englander's *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges* (1999), and Tova Mirvis's *The Ladies Auxiliary* (1999). Given the confluence of such novels and short stories, I have been wondering of late whether the Jew (the real "Jewy" Jew, that is, the Orthodox Jew) has suddenly become chic in the popular imagination, and whether this mainstream hunger for

images of “authentic” Jews smacks of exploitation similar in kind, if not degree, to the hunger among affluent white audiences for images of “authentic” African-Americans during the 1920s, when, as Langston Hughes ruefully reflected, the Negro was in vogue.

Before addressing this admittedly dour possibility, it may be helpful to take a step back to explore the external pressures that informed the Jewish voice in America earlier in the century. What those very first Jewish-American works celebrated by mainstream readers tell us, it seems to me, is that white non-Jews hungered not for depictions of intractable Orthodox Jews—but for Jewish heroes and heroines willing to assimilate to American/white codes of conduct. They hungered, in short, for books like Anzia Yezierska’s *Hungry Hearts* (1920), which earned Yezierska a nice advance from Houghton Mifflin and a whopping \$10,000 in film rights from Samuel Goldwyn. (Granted, Goldwyn was a Jew, but, above all, he was a shrewd businessman who catered to popular demand.) In the wake of massive Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe—in the thirty-three years between the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881 and the outbreak of the First World War—the 1920s were a time of rising nativist sentiment in America. Against this xenophobic zeitgeist, Yezierska, as Blanche Gelfant aptly put it, “hoped to present the abjected poor as desirable people who desired, above all else, to become Americans.”

The contrast, then, between mainstream demands from Jewish and African-American artists in the 1920s is striking. Whereas whites hungered for African-Americans to affirm their otherness via minstrelsy of one sort or the other (against which whites could define their own superior whiteness), they sought assurances in Jewish-American art that these newly arrived, unwashed immigrants could clean up their act and become American/white. Although Ashkenazic Jews were viewed by most whites during the early twentieth century as a distinct race, their olive hues—in stark contrast to the African-Americans’ darker hues—were, evidently, bleachable in the eyes of the white mainstream.

If we leap ahead to the 1950s and 1960s—the literary period often referred to these days as the Golden Age of Jewish-American writing—we see that the most popular Jewish protagonists continue to affirm their Americanness well over and beyond their lingering Jewishness. Consider, for example, Bernard Malamud’s National Book Award winning novel, *The Assistant* (1957), and its long-suffering protagonist, Morris Bober. Bober struggles as a grocer to support his family, to accommodate the demands of his ungrateful customers, and generally to aid and assist his fellow human beings in his declining Brooklyn neighborhood. But he is hardly an observant Jew. He samples the ham in his deli case, opens up his grocery store on the Jewish



Sabbath, and rarely attends synagogue, all of which confuses his Italian-American assistant, who finally must ask his boss, “what is a Jew anyway?” After some hemming and hawing, Morris finally contends that to be a Jew is “to do what is right, to be honest, to be good. This means to other people. Our life is hard enough. Why should we hurt somebody else? For everybody should be the best, not only for you or me. We ain’t animals. This is why we need the Law. This is what a Jew believes.” Noble sentiments. But not particularly Judaic, as Bober’s assistant astutely recognizes. “I think other religions have those ideas too,” he replies, somewhat deflated.

Morris Bober, and other saintly schlemiel protagonists of this era (e.g., S. Levin, Moses Herzog, Gimpel the Fool), resonated with mainstream readers because they embodied—in a concentrated formula—the physical and spiritual malaise of the 1950s and early 1960s and the broad humanistic values American readers so wished to affirm. Malamud and his cohorts (Saul Bellow and Philip Roth, most notably) created Jews who, as the old quip goes, were just like everybody else, only more so. “Morris Bober, c’est moi,” the white non-Jewish reader could somehow claim. This was Malamud’s genius, and the secret to his mainstream success. “All men are Jews,” he famously declared. And the public apparently agreed. But, in retrospect, it seems just as true that Malamud, Bellow, and Roth proved the converse—that the Jew could be fashioned fictively into an every-man.

All of which made Chaim Potok’s Orthodox Jewish characters in his best-selling debut novel, *The Chosen* (1967), a refreshing change of pace for the Jewish-American novel. Daphne Merkin presciently put her finger on the pulse of the mainstream enthusiasm for Potok’s work when she observed in 1976 that “After all the countless portrayals in American fiction of wandering and assimilated Jews—from Malamud’s S. Levin to Bellow’s Moses Herzog to Roth’s Alexander Portnoy—the literary public, at least a large and enthusiastic segment of it, would seem to be ready for Chaim Potok’s version of the American Jew—one who has never left the traditional Jewish community.” From the beginning, Potok’s work has been dismissed by several critics as a mere collection of pot-boilers; in retrospect, we can see that he anticipated the current surge of Orthodox Jewish-American protagonists, torn between the intractable demands of their tight-knit communities and the various enticements of the secular realm (most notably, science and art, in Potok’s case). For, in various permutations, this overarching tension appears to be the *idée fixe* of our young, emergent Jewish-American writers.

Rachel Benjamin, in Abraham’s debut novel, *The Romance Reader*, struggles to reconcile her religious ardor and the love for her Hasidic family and community with her creative and fiercely independent nature. The novel unfolds

as Rachel tests out several modes of existence both within and without the traditions of her Hasidic community. In *Kaaterskill Falls*, a National Book Award finalist, Goodman also painstakingly evokes the tensions between ultra-Orthodox ritual and law and her characters' longings to partake of the secular world: "If she could do more than watch; if she could participate—do something or create something in the shimmering, spinning secular world." These are the frustrated dreams of Goodman's protagonist, Elizabeth Shulman. Several of the celebrated stories in Englander's *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges* pivot about similar tensions between Orthodoxy and secular individualism, and Mirvis's *The Ladies Auxiliary* consists largely of the communal gossip inspired by the rebellious acts of a creative, and fiercely individual, female convert struggling to gain acceptance in an Orthodox Jewish enclave in Memphis.

Might we see this profusion of Orthodox Jews across the literary landscape as simply a happy continuation of the trend that Potok initiated, one that affirms at long last our cultural confidence in this place we might finally consider a home, rather than host, country? In short, isn't this all good for the Jews? For the past few years I have answered this question with an unqualified "yes." And I am not inclined now to reverse that answer to an unqualified "no." But insofar as popular demand both encourages and discourages literary production, we ought to be more reflective about the overwhelming popularity these days of the "Jewish" Jewish-American novel. These forces from without are not always so benevolent, which accounts for my concern of late over the types of Jewish novels aggressively marketed by major publishers and hungrily consumed by the literary public.

I realize I have a (Jewish?) penchant for seeking out the cloud within every silver lining. Jewish novels? Aggressively marketed? Hungrily consumed? What am I kvetching about? Well, the specific source of my discomfort crystallized for me recently in a friend's capsule description of a Jewish novel I had expressed interest in reading. "It's sort of, you know, Hullabaloo in the Matzah Factory." This single sentence, this flippant, wry reference to the popular Indian-American novel by Kiran Desai, prompted my realization that the current popularity of the "Jewish" Jewish-American novel was not an isolated literary phenomena, but part of the widespread craving among mainstream readers and critics for multicultural voices and visions. Now, to be sure, our multicultural zeitgeist (literary and otherwise) is not altogether, or even mostly, pernicious. As an English professor who teaches courses with titles such as Jewish-American Fiction, Asian-American Literatures, and Fictions of Multiculturalism, I consider myself something of a multiculturalist.

The surge of mainstream and scholarly interest in Latino/a, Asian-American, and American Indian voices reflects, above all, the brilliance of many of these voices, and

(continued on page 52)

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PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE



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IS THE JEW IN VOGUE? (continued from page 31)

the legitimate yearning of readers and writers to make up for lost time. Welcome Sherman Alexie's unsparing evocation of Washington's Spokane Indian Reservation! Welcome Gish Jen's depictions of the tensions, at once poignant and hilarious, between Chinese immigrants and their "born here" children and grandchildren! Welcome Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Indian-American men and women still fiercely attached to their rituals and the pastoral Indian countryside of their youth! Welcome Cristina Garcia's Cuban exiles who still stubbornly dream in Cuban!

And yet, I'm concerned that readers in America these days demand ever more exotic, and exoticized, images of American ethnics. I'm thinking again of Hughes, though I wouldn't say that the insatiable demand for ever more exotic settings, characters, clothes, food, and rituals is a sign that the literary public is embracing increasingly ethnic art to affirm their own whiteness and superiority. Rather, our current crop of multicultural writers, in my view, offer American readers a temporary measure of relief from the deadening sameness that increasingly defines American life from coast to coast. The Wal-Marts and Home Depots in every town. The homogenous, sprawling suburban developments that have supplanted the bustling urban centers. The Internet.

To some, these phenomena are signs of our prosperity. Yet they are also forces that have contributed to the fragmentation and obliteration of local communities and to an increasingly antiseptic American ethos.

"There's a community?" Jerry Seinfeld asks quizzically in an episode of his popular television show. He delivers the line to comic effect after one of his co-stars vents her exaggerated fear of being ostracized by the community. But the line trenchantly evokes the soulless individualism that more and more defines the American identity, a narcissistic individualism that Seinfeld so richly parodied. Thanks to our sheltered suburbs and the Internet, we need not interact with another human being all day long, even to do our shopping. But what all the hoopla over the Internet and globalization leaves out is that villages cannot be global; they must be local. Without real community, real human intercourse carried out in distinct neighborhoods, stores, and streets, the American ethos veers dangerously toward soullessness.

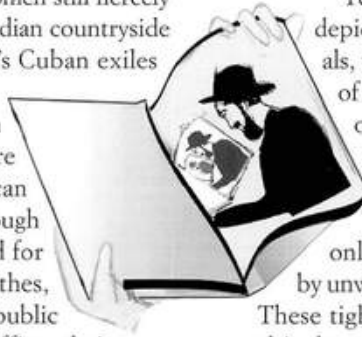
Against this deadening milieu, multicultural writers offer mainstream readers vicarious community, vicarious family. Of course, the best of these writers, Jewish and otherwise, refuse to idealize their distinct milieus. A disconcerting caste and class-conscious elitism and racism plague Jen's immigrant Chinese parents in her novels and short stories; alcoholism and its associated ills pervade Alexie's Spokane Reservation in his ever increasing oeuvre; the repression of women endures as a salient feature of the traditional Indian

communities in Divakaruni's work; brutal violence often accompanies Garcia's depictions of male-female relationships among her Cubans and Cuban exiles; and the Orthodox Jewish strictures in Englander's universe bear down heavily upon his more creative and independent characters (especially women) and preclude intimacy between at least two of the married couples in his collection.

Yet, in spite of these fiercely unromanticized depictions of multicultural mores, values, and rituals, the American public yearns for such evocations of distinct communities that somehow endure in our increasingly homogenous, consumerist culture. We don't want to affirm the backwardness of these communities and the superiority of mainstream culture but rather to partake, if only vicariously, in a distinct community defined by unwavering codes of etiquette, ritual and, yes, love.

These tight-knit and orderly—albeit often repressive—multicultural communities and families offer a balm for a mainstream readership increasingly bereft of community and family. When Mirvis's protagonist in *The Ladies Auxiliary* declares, "I've always wanted to be part of a small, close-knit community," she not only partially explains why she converted to Orthodox Judaism, but also puts her finger on the pulse of an American society in crisis. Put another way, if it was Malamud's genius to create the Jewish-American as every-man, it is Mirvis's genius, and that of her contemporaries, to create Jewish-American and other multicultural protagonists who dramatically veer from the now dysfunctional every-man (or woman) identity. (Just as it will rightly be interpreted as the Democrats' genius to have chosen a recognizably Orthodox Jewish running-mate for Al Gore should they win the upcoming presidential election.)

This is not to say that all, or even most, of the multicultural contemporary American fiction published these days, Jewish and otherwise, is tainted by the insatiable mainstream hunger for such exotic literary fare. While some counterfeit writers—their book jackets often emblazoned with exotic fruits and berries—have hitched a ride on the multicultural bandwagon, I have intentionally described above works I admire in various degrees, works that ought to be published and promoted in any literary time or clime. Still, when Indian women writers in America are encouraged to don saris on their book-jacket covers and Jewish writers are encouraged to let their dark, curly locks flow freely down their shoulders, it is high time to take stock of the external pressures driving the literary marketplace. We should, of course, celebrate and encourage the profusion of distinct multicultural voices in American art and culture. Let us sound our distinct Jewish, Bengali, Spokane and Latina yawps over the roofs of the world! Let us just make sure that they are our yawps, our identities, our ideas, our dreams and nightmares that we transmute into art, not those we are compelled to imagine by a mainstream readership in crisis. □



A Smart Heart

Danny Siegel

Three things in human life are important:
The first is to be kind.
The second is to be kind.
And the third is to be kind.

—Henry James

Two Jewish High School Graduations

A student, speaking at her graduation from a Jewish high school last year, said: “Here we learned to be caring people (*“Ba’alay Rachmanut”*). Here we learned to be goodhearted (*“Tovay Lev”*).”

I was there because I was the guest speaker, but, as far as I am concerned, that student stole the show. I was so moved that I wanted to get up right in the middle of her four-minute presentation to hug her, to hug the others who had prepared the speech with her, to hug *all* the graduates who clearly agreed with the sentiment.

I mention this because last summer a recent announcement from a different Jewish high school graduation in a Jewish paper caught my eye. Their ad featured a lovely picture of the graduates, a note of congratulation, and a list of all the colleges and yeshivas the students are attending this year.

To my mind, the school that proudly placed this announcement missed the point. The implication—*unintended* I am sure—is that the purpose of the education they offered was to get their students into fine colleges and yeshivas. What a contrast to the end-result of the other school: caring people, good-hearted people.

Jews have taken great pride in the intellectual achievements of their children, and justifiably so. As Jews, our history as immigrants in America made it critical that we get good jobs and have some stability in the New Land. My father, may he rest in peace, was going to be a doctor, no questions asked. That was the message from his Russian immigrant parents who had a small drygoods store in New Jersey.

Another Quote

Rav stated: The Mitzvot were given in order to refine human beings.

—[Leviticus Rabba 13:3 [Margoliot Edition]]

Torah study ought to lead us to a life of Mitzvahs. And, if we take Rav’s statement seriously, Mitzvahs have the ability to

Danny Siegel is the author of twenty books including 1+1=3 and 37 Other Mitzvah Principles to Live By, and Tell Me a Mitzvah, Tzedakah Stories for Children. To learn more about making Mitzvahs happen check out www.ziv.org.



help mold our character. Mitzvahs can filter out jealousy, mean-spiritedness, prejudice, hatred, self-centeredness, melancholy, despair, and divisiveness, and foster such human qualities as love, caring, joy, optimism-about-life, altruism, and desire-for-Menschlichkeit. Of course, doing X or Y or Z does not *automatically* mean that the Mitzvah-doer will become an A or B or C type of person. But Rav means that making Mitzvahs happen *can* bring us closer to that goal.

Some people just seem downright decent, pleasant people. Others have to struggle with it every day, every hour, in a process filled with anguish.

It is good to know that one of our Jewish institutions wants to make kindness such a high priority, because, in my opinion, what the world needs is much more kindness. Not that honing intellectual skills isn’t of great importance, but, at least from the standpoint of *Tikkun Olam*, a caring heart is what ultimately counts.

The Heroes

I spend my time with heroes, Mitzvah heroes. They take on the realities of *Tikkun Olam* with their giant, medium-sized, and small programs. They are inspiring and inspired and devoted to the Right Things. And ... to the very last one of them, they are kind people. They are gentle, some, so very sweet, you melt in their presence. I would like our youth to have *them* as their role models. I want them to say, “Yes, I would like to be like these gentle people when I grow up.” If they happen to have doctorates or are well-placed in successful professional positions, that is wonderful. But before that, and above that, is the caring and the good-heartedness.

The Third Quote

Yeho’ash, the Yiddish translator of the Torah, translates the phrase “*chacham lev*” in Exodus 36:2 as “*klughartzig*.” “*Chacham*” means “wise” and “*lev*” means “heart.” Putting them together in one grand Yiddish word, *klughartzig*, means something like, “applying-one’s-mind-in-the-service-of-the-heart.” A lot of hyphens. Good! I would add some more: let the graduates of our Jewish schools be described as follows: good-hearted, big-hearted, open-hearted, warm-hearted, fine-hearted, passion-hearted, deep-hearted, grand-hearted, smart-hearted, bright-hearted, brilliant-hearted, smart-hearted, sweet-hearted, in a word ... *klughartzig*.

They need it.

We *all* need it.

The High Stakes of Cancer Prevention

Samuel S. Epstein and Liza Gross

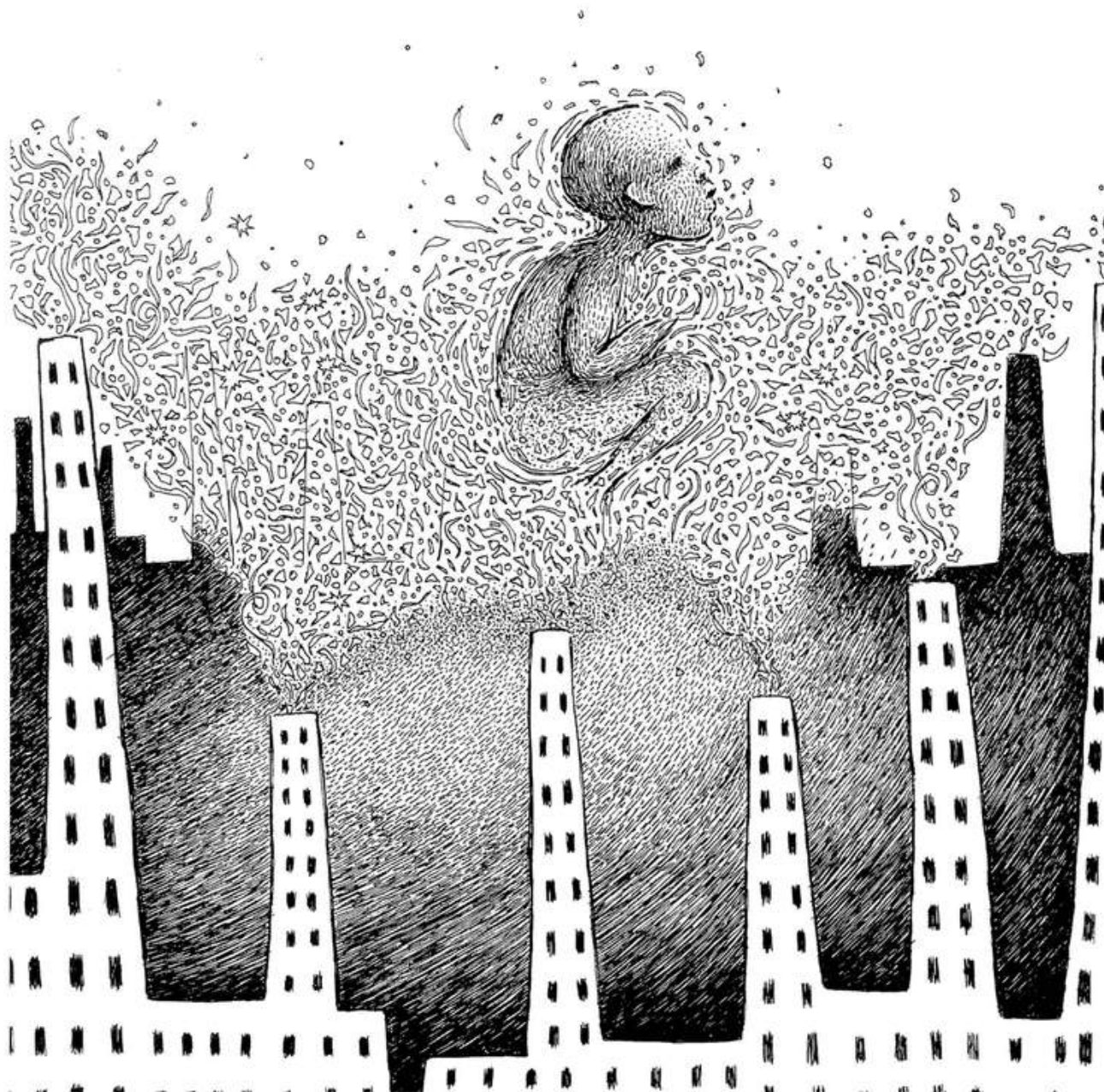
It's hard to find someone these days who hasn't had firsthand experience with cancer. Watching friends, neighbors, and loved ones struggle with the disease, more and more Americans sign up for walks, races, and donation pledges, hoping to help find the magic bullet—a cure. That cure, we hear again and again, is just around the corner. And now, for the first time since President Richard Nixon launched the war on cancer in 1971, public officials are talking about an all-out effort to wipe out the disease in

our lifetime. After all, this is an election year, and cancer makes good politics. Who can argue against fighting cancer?

The question is how we go about it. Presidential hopeful Al Gore unveiled a plan in June 1999 to assure “revolutionary

Samuel S. Epstein, M.D., is a professor of occupational and environmental medicine at the University of Illinois Medical Center and the author of ten books including The Politics of Cancer. Liza Gross is a science and environmental health writer.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAC MCGILL





progress in preventing, detecting, and treating cancer in the 21st century.” This past June he promised to double federal funding on cancer research to prevent and cure the most fatal cancers. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) launched her own cancer initiative last year, calling for a rehaul of the 1971 National Cancer Act through bipartisan legislation that “fully exploits current scientific opportunity and progress in the fight against cancer.”

Both politicians have a very personal stake in the cancer debate. Gore lost his sister to lung cancer, an experience he described in grim detail in his famous 1996 Democratic National Convention speech. Feinstein lost her first husband to colon cancer, as well as many other family members and close friends to other forms of the disease. Yet, however well intentioned these initiatives are, neither proposal challenges the fundamental direction of the national cancer agenda. Gore’s five-step plan makes no mention of preventing cancer until step four. Most of this “prevention” plank misleadingly focuses on improving access to screening tests and proposes campaigns limited to changing lifestyle habits and stopping children from smoking. Nowhere does Gore’s proposal call for reducing or eliminating exposure to known carcinogens in our air, food, and water, in our consumer products (both personal care and household goods), or in our workplaces. Feinstein’s initiative promises “to be as inclusive as possible in seeking input from the widest range of diverse sources,” yet control of her proposal rests largely with the old guard of the cancer establishment, primarily represented by the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute.

The cancer establishment has a long history of trivializing or ignoring prevention initiatives while claiming major gains in the war on cancer. Both the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the American Cancer Society (ACS) are fixated on damage control—screening, diagnosis, and treatment—and genetic research, and are largely indifferent to cancer prevention. For the American Cancer Society, that indifference approaches outright hostility. What the cancer establishment calls prevention is more aptly described as a “blame-the-victim” approach, emphasizing poor lifestyle habits while downplaying the role of avoidable exposures.

The cancer establishment has been most negligent in its failure to provide Congress, regulatory agencies, and the public with well-documented scientific evidence of known cancer risks. This information is essential for Congress if it is to protect the public by legislating or banning the addition of recognized carcinogens, from food additives to pesticides. Regulatory agencies need it to create standards for a wide range of industrial carcinogens and, as citizens, we have a right to know about and to protect ourselves from dangerous chemicals that contaminate our food, air, water, and consumer goods. Where was the cancer establishment last May, when the Environmental Protection Agency, entrusted with keeping the nation’s water supplies safe, approved arsenic levels that pose a greater cancer risk than any other tap-water

standard (on the grounds that it could not justify the high costs of regulation since most resulting cancers would be “curable”)?

This aversion to prevention is complicated by conflicts of interest springing from the cancer establishment’s intimate connections with corporate America. The cancer drug industry regularly trolls the National Cancer Institute for executive hires, prompting former NCI Director Samuel Broder to charge that “the NCI has become what amounts to a governmental pharmaceutical company.” Meanwhile, industrial interests are well represented on the American Cancer Society’s twenty-two member board, which was created in 1990 to solicit corporate contributions over \$100,000. The board includes members from companies that either profit handsomely from treating cancer, like Amgen, or contribute to the disease by polluting the environment with a wide range of carcinogens, like the major pesticide manufacturer, American Cyanamid. It is no great surprise that ACS policies more often reflect the interests of these companies than those of public health.

In 1992 a coalition of sixty-five experts in public health, preventive medicine, and cancer research—including former directors of three federal agencies—accused the ACS and NCI of misleading the public and Congress with their repeated claims to be winning the war on cancer. The coalition (chaired by a co-author of this article, Dr. Samuel S. Epstein) called for greater emphasis on prevention and recommended a large-scale national campaign to educate the public that “much cancer is avoidable and due to past (and continuing) exposures to chemical and physical carcinogens in air, water, food, and the workplace, as well as to lifestyle factors, particularly smoking.”

The coalition predicted that such sweeping reforms would never come to pass without amending the National Cancer Act “explicitly to reorient the mission and priorities of the NCI to cancer cause and prevention.” With the odds of getting cancer at an all-time high, we desperately need new cancer legislation if we are to win the war against cancer. But there is little hope of effecting meaningful reform with the cancer establishment in charge, sounding the same tired battle cry they did in 1971.

Don’t Believe the Hype

Last March, newspapers across the country dutifully heralded a decline in cancer incidence and mortality, citing the latest annual report of the American Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute, and other cancer organizations. The report credited the decline to lifestyle changes, improved detection, and reduced smoking.

Despite such celebrated claims of progress against the disease, the facts tell a different story. Reversal in overall mortality rates has been minimal and due largely to a reduction in lung cancer deaths from reduced smoking in men rather than to advances in treatment. Overall five-year



survival rates for all cancers have remained virtually static since 1970, from 49 to 54 percent for all races combined, and from 39 to 40 percent for African Americans. Dr. John Bailar, formerly an epidemiologist at the NCI and now chair of the Department of Health Studies at the University of Chicago, has found that reduced mortality rates are more likely the result of earlier detection and diagnosis rather than improved cancer treatments.

Meanwhile, cancer incidence has escalated to epidemic proportions over recent decades, with lifetime risks in the United States now reaching one in two for men and one in three for women. In 2000, more than 1.2 million new cancer diagnoses are expected, and some 550,000 Americans will die from the disease. The overall increase of all cancers from 1950 to 1995 was 55 percent, of which lung cancer accounted for about a quarter. Meanwhile, the incidence of a wide range of non-smoking cancers, such as non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, multiple myeloma, and adult brain cancer, is increasing at proportionately greater rates, including an alarming rise in childhood cancer of over 20 percent.

Longer life expectancy cannot explain these increases, as incidence and mortality rates in cancer registries are age-adjusted to reflect these trends. Nor can the epidemic be attributed primarily to poor lifestyle habits. Smoking is clearly the single most important cause of cancer, but lung cancer rates for men are declining because men are smoking less. (Rates for women are about the same, as the number of women smokers has remained steady.) And while a high-fat diet may increase risk by passing on toxic chemicals that accumulate in fatty tissues, fat per se cannot be incriminated as a major cause of cancer, in sharp contrast to heart disease. In Mediterranean countries, where up to 40 percent of the average person's diet is composed of olive oil, breast cancer rates are low, and epidemiological studies

over the past two decades have consistently failed to establish any causal relationship between breast cancer and fat consumption.

Finally, rising rates cannot be attributed to genetic factors. Not only do genetic factors alone account for relatively few cancers, the genetics of human populations cannot possibly have changed within the past few decades. And in what may be the largest study ever to compare the role of genes versus environment in cancer, Dr. Paul Lichtenstein and his colleagues reported in *The New England Journal of Medicine* last July that "the overwhelming contributor to the causation of cancer in the populations of twins that we studied was the environment."

What then is driving the modern cancer epidemic? Study after study points to the role of runaway industrial technologies, particularly those based on petrochemicals. The explosive growth of the petrochemical industry since the 1940s has far outpaced legislative and regulatory controls, producing a dizzying array of synthetic chemicals that have never been screened for human health effects: of the roughly 75,000 chemicals in use today, only some 3 percent have been tested for safety. For over fifty years, in other words, the American public has been unknowingly exposed to avoidable carcinogens from the moment of conception until death.

Follow the Money

The American Cancer Society's mission statement says it is dedicated to "preventing cancer and saving lives—through research education, advocacy, and service." Yet what the Society seems to do best is accumulate wealth. According to James Bennett, a professor of economics at George Mason University who tracks charitable organizations, the ACS held a fund balance of over \$400 million with about \$69 million worth of holdings in real estate, office buildings, and



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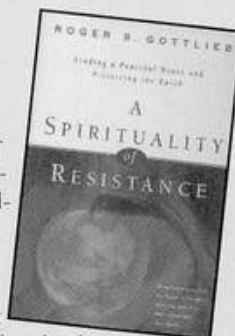
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equipment in 1988. ("How raw land helps us find a cure for cancer or helps cancer victims is an enigma I can't fathom," says Bennett.) Of that money, the ACS spent only \$90 million—barely a quarter of its budget—on medical research and related programs. The rest covered "operating expenses," including about 60 percent for salaries, pensions, executive benefits, and overhead. By 1989, ACS cash reserves had reached over \$700 million.

In a 1992 *Wall Street Journal* article, Loyola University professor of economics Thomas DiLorenzo charged that a high percentage of funds raised by the ACS went to pay overhead, salaries, benefits, and travel expenses for national executives in Atlanta. For every ACS affiliate, salaries and fringe benefits were by far the largest single budget item. Most direct services were provided by volunteers. For every dollar spent on direct community services, such as driving cancer patients from the hospital after chemotherapy and providing pain medication, approximately \$6.40 was spent on compensation and overhead. At most, 16 percent of all money raised nationally was spent on direct services. Yet Society fundraising appeals routinely asked for more funds to support their cancer programs.

"If current needs are not being met because of insufficient funds, as fundraising appeals suggest," asked DiLorenzo, "why is so much being hoarded? Most contributors believe their donations are being used to fight cancer, not to accumulate financial reserves. More progress in the war against cancer would be made if they would divest some of their real estate holdings and use the proceeds—as well as a portion of their cash reserves—to provide more cancer services."

Things haven't changed much since DiLorenzo's findings. By 1998, based on the Society's annual budget report, revenues had reached \$677 million. In 1998, the Society spent some \$140 million on "supporting services" such as overhead, salaries in the \$220,000 range for regional directors (national executives' salaries are not disclosed), benefits and travel expenses, fundraising, and public relations. It had \$800 million in reserves.

The Society's penchant for storing wealth over funding research and services prompted the Chronicle of Philanthropy, a watchdog organization that monitors major charities, to analyze its budgets and programs. The Chronicle concluded that the American Cancer Society is "more interested in accumulating wealth than saving lives."

Prevention First?

Even as the Society's purse grows, its spending on prevention research remains nominal at best. Responding to a 1999 article in *Sierra*, the magazine of the Sierra Club, which charged the ACS with indifference to prevention, Dr. Harmon Eyre, executive vice president for research and medical affairs for the Society, released details of its allocations for research on environmental carcinogenesis. Yet while Eyre claims cancer cause and prevention are a high

priority and receive generous funding from the ACS, his documentation says the contrary. Eyre's figures indicate the Society spent \$2.6 million in 1998 on nineteen large research grants on environmental carcinogenesis, but only three grants could reasonably qualify as environmental cancer research. And although the Society claims it allocated \$100 million of its \$677 million budget to support cancer research in 1998, analysis reveals that actual expenditures on environmental carcinogenesis totaled less than \$500,000, well under one-hundredth of one percent of the Society's total annual budget.

The situation with the National Cancer Institute is not much better. The agency has professed a commitment to prevention, but its budget and policy priorities belie any such claim. Of an approximately \$3 billion budget, the National Cancer Institute allocates less than one percent to researching occupational cancers, even though they are the most preventable cancers. Over 10 percent of adult cancer deaths result from occupational exposures, which are also a recognized cause of cancer in children: parents exposed to carcinogens on the job often expose their unborn children to the same cancer-causing chemicals. And while the NCI says that diet accounts for roughly one-third of all cancers, it spends just \$1 million on education, media, and public outreach to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables for cancer prevention, while ignoring well-documented evidence that produce contaminated with carcinogenic pesticide residues increases risk. It also fails to educate the public about the cancer risks posed by a wide range of industrial by-products and contaminants, particularly dioxin.

The American Cancer Society has not only remained silent about removing known carcinogens from our midst, it has lent its considerable influence and media muscle to help industry defeat such efforts. Thumbing its nose at an impressive body of legislative and regulatory precedents such as the Delaney amendment, which until 1996 banned the addition of known carcinogens to food products, the ACS has consistently rejected the relevance of animal evidence as predictive of human risk. (In direct contradiction to previous ACS protests and statements, Eyre claims the Society had not supported Delaney because it "was just not strong or potentially effective enough.") When studies unequivocally proved in 1971 that diethylstilbestrol (DES) caused vaginal cancers in teenage daughters of women who had taken the drug during pregnancy, the ACS refused to testify at congressional hearings on whether the FDA should ban the drug's use as an animal-feed additive. (It had long ignored evidence that DES is a potent carcinogen in rodents, known since 1939.) And in 1977, the ACS called for a congressional moratorium on the FDA's proposed ban on saccharin, going so far as to advocate its use by nursing mothers and babies in "moderation" despite clear-cut evidence of its carcinogenicity in rodents and very suggestive evidence of bladder cancer in humans.



Backing the cosmetics industry in 1977 and 1978, the ACS fought proposed regulations for permanent dark hair-coloring products containing dyes known to cause breast cancer in animals, and now implicated as a cause of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and other cancers. In 1982 it formally codified its insistence on unequivocal human evidence of carcinogenicity before speaking out against potential public health hazards, ignoring virtually every tenet of responsible public health policy. The Society, however, apparently has no problem defending chemicals or products when no such proof of their safety exists. In 1992, the ACS issued a joint statement with the Chlorine Institute in support of the continued global use of organochlorine pesticides, despite evidence that some were known to cause breast and other cancers. And in 1996, it joined a diverse group of patients and physician groups to file a petition against the FDA to ease restrictions on silicone breast implants. The ACS failed to disclose industry studies that showed the gel in the implants induced cancer, and that the implants were contaminated with known carcinogens such as ethylene oxide and crystalline silica.

In its latest annual report, "Cancer Facts & Figures 1999," the ACS makes no reference to avoidable causes of a range of cancers, although it belatedly acknowledges that women can take steps to reduce breast cancer risk. (The 1998 report makes no reference to prevention.) Despite a promise of "cancer facts," the Society neglects to inform the public about a number of well-documented cancer risks. Among them: dusting the genital area with talc increases risk of ovarian cancer; home and garden use of pesticides, or consumption of nitrite-colored hot dogs contaminated with the highly potent carcinogen nitrosamine are well-recognized risk factors for childhood leukemia and brain cancer; and animal and dairy fats and mainstream produce are exposing consumers to a wide range of carcinogenic pesticide residues, unlike safer organic foods.

Defending Pesticides

The degree of collusion between the ACS and the chemical industry became clear to Marty Koughan, a public television producer, in 1993, when he was working on a documentary about pesticide dangers to children for PBS's Frontline. Koughan's investigation relied heavily on "Pesticides in the Diet of Children," an embargoed, groundbreaking report from the National Academy of Sciences. The report declared the nation's food supply "inadequately protected" from cancer-causing pesticides and a significant threat to children's health.

Shortly before Koughan's program was scheduled to air, a draft of the script was leaked to Porter-Novelli, a high-

powered PR firm for produce growers and the agricultural industry. In true Washington fashion, Porter-Novelli plays both sides of the fence, representing not only government agencies but also the industries they regulate. Its 1993 client list included DuPont, Monsanto, American Petroleum Institute, and Hoffman-LaRoche—as well as the USDA and the NCI. Porter-Novelli has also done pro bono work for the ACS for years.

First crafting a rebuttal to help manufacturers soothe public fears about pesticide-contaminated food, Porter-Novelli then faxed a copy to ACS headquarters in Atlanta. The rebuttal was emailed to 3,000 regional ACS offices to help field viewers' calls after the show aired. It read: "The program makes unfounded suggestions ... that pesticide residues in food may be at hazardous levels. Its use of 'cancer cluster' leukemia case reports and non-specific community illnesses as alleged evidence of pesticide effects

in people is unfortunate. We know of no community cancer clusters which have been shown to be anything other than chance grouping of cases and none in which pesticide use was confirmed as the cause."

This unabashed defense of the pesticide industry was taken up by the right-wing group Accuracy in Media in an article called "Junk Science on PBS." Asking, "Can we afford the Public Broadcasting Service?" the piece went on to discredit Koughan's documentary: "'In Our Children's Food' ... exemplified what the media have done to produce these 'popular panics.'"

Koughan was outraged that the ACS was being used to defend the pesticide industry. "At first, I assumed complete ignorance on the part of the ACS," said Koughan. But after unsuccessful efforts to get the national office to rebut the AIM article, Koughan finally grasped what was happening. "When I realized Porter-Novelli represented five agricultural companies, and that the ACS had been its client for years, it became obvious that the ACS had not been fooled at all," he said. "They were willing partners in the deception, and were in fact doing a favor for a friend by flacking for the agricultural industry."

Friends of the Mammography Industry

Just as interlocking interests with major chemical manufacturers go a long way toward explaining the Society's resistance to prevention initiatives, close connections to the mammography and cancer-drug industry shed light on its treatment recommendations. Five of its past presidents were radiologists. In every move, it reflects the interests of major manufacturers of mammogram machines and film, including Siemens, DuPont, General Electric, Eastman Kodak, and Piker. If every premenopausal woman were to

"It became obvious that the ACS had not been fooled at all. They were willing partners in the deception."

HEALTH



follow its mammography guidelines, the annual revenue to health care facilities would be an additional \$2.5 billion.

The mammography industry conducts research for the Society and its grantees, serves on its advisory boards, and donates considerable funds. DuPont, a major manufacturer of mammography equipment (in addition to being a major petrochemical manufacturer), is a primary supporter of the ACS Breast Health Awareness Program. The company sponsors television shows and other media productions touting mammography; produces advertising, promotional, and informational literature for hospitals, clinics, medical organizations, and doctors; produces educational films; and lobbies Congress for legislation promoting access to mammography services. In virtually all important actions, the ACS aligns itself with the mammography industry, failing to pursue viable alternatives to mammography.

The ACS urges premenopausal women to get mammograms even though evidence suggests that premenopausal women are more sensitive to cancer risks from radiation; there is no evidence of benefit or effectiveness for premenopausal women; false negatives—as well as false positives—are common because the dense breast tissue of premenopausal women confounds test results. The NCI no longer endorses premenopausal mammography, nor is it practiced in Canada or Europe or any other country in the world.

Mammography is truly an ACS crusade, and the annual “National Breast Cancer Awareness Month” campaign is at its center. ACS representatives help sponsor promotional events and stress the need for mammography every October with the campaign’s centerpiece, National Mammography Day. Absent from the proselytizing is any information on environmental and other avoidable causes of breast cancer. This is no accident. As the multimillion-dollar funder of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca influences every leaflet, poster, and commercial product produced by the campaign. It’s no wonder these publications focus almost exclusively on mammography while ignoring carcinogenic industrial chemicals and their relation to breast cancer. When it founded Breast Cancer Awareness Month in 1985, AstraZeneca (formerly known as Zeneca before it merged with the Swedish pharmaceutical company Astra) was owned by Imperial Chemical Industries, a leading international manufacturer of industrial chemicals and carcinogenic pesticides. National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a masterful public relations coup for AstraZeneca, providing the company with valuable, albeit undeserved, goodwill from millions of American women.

AstraZeneca profits from treating breast cancer, and hopes to profit still more from the prospects of large-scale national use of Tamoxifen for breast cancer “prevention.” The NCI and the ACS both embraced AstraZeneca’s new drug, aggressively launching a “chemoprevention” program

in 1992 aimed at recruiting 16,000 healthy women at “high risk” of breast cancer. The five-year clinical trial claimed that Tamoxifen reduced breast cancer risks by 30 percent. The risks of this toxic drug, including potentially fatal uterine cancer and blood clots, were noted but trivialized. As the trials progressed, it became clear that the risk of serious complications outweighed professed benefits. Women have still not been informed about delayed risks of liver cancer. Equally troubling, neither the ACS nor the NCI has pursued evidence that regular use of a cheap, nonpatented, over-the-counter drug—*aspirin*—has been shown to reduce risks of breast cancer. (A 1996 study found that women who took aspirin three times a week for five years reduced their risk by up to 30 percent, a finding worth pursuing.)

For years the ACS demonstrated its allegiance to the multibillion-dollar cancer drug industry by aggressively attacking potential competitors through its “Committee on Unproven Methods of Cancer Management,” created to “review” unorthodox or alternative therapies. This committee, staffed by “volunteer health care professionals,” invariably promoted mainstream, expensive, and arguably toxic drugs patented by major pharmaceutical companies, and opposed alternative or “unproven” therapies, which are generally cheap, non-patentable, and minimally toxic. As with Senator Joseph McCarthy’s blacklist of suspected communists, once a clinician or oncologist was associated with “unproven methods,” harassment and blackballing often followed, and funding would dry up. This witch hunt against alternative practitioners was in striking contrast to the Society’s uncritical endorsement of conventional toxic chemotherapy, despite increasing concern that chemotherapy may not significantly improve survival rates for most cancers. After an extensive review of clinical oncology studies, for example, Dr. Ulrich Abel of the Institute of Epidemiology and Biometry at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, concluded that for most patients chemotherapy functions as little more than a placebo, with an attendant decline in quality of life from the toxic treatment.

Bucking the Cancer System

Over the past twenty years cancer patients have become increasingly frustrated—but also increasingly organized. Disillusioned with the cancer establishment’s definition of “progress” and “prevention” and fed up with the toxic side effects of conventional treatments, grassroots cancer activists convinced forty members of Congress to investigate the efficacy of alternative therapies. Congress enlisted the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), a congressional think tank, to do the job. In 1990, OTA identified some 200 promising studies on alternative treatments, and concluded that NCI had “a mandated responsibility to pursue this information and facilitate examination of widely used ‘unconventional cancer treatments’ for therapeutic potential.”



Yet mainstream cancer organization have not followed the OTA's recommendations. For example, in the January 1991 issue of its *Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, the ACS dismissed the Hoxsey therapy, a non-toxic combination of herb extracts developed in the 1940s by populist Harry Hoxsey, as a "worthless tonic for cancer." However, a detailed critique of Hoxsey's treatment by Dr. Patricia Spain Ward, a leading contributor to the OTA report, concluded just the opposite: "More recent literature leaves no doubt that Hoxsey's formula does indeed contain many plant substances of marked therapeutic activity." In his recently published book, *When Healing Becomes a Crime*, Kenny Ausubel chronicles the cancer establishment's unbridled—and scientifically unsubstantiated—attacks against the Hoxsey treatment and other promising new therapies, without even bothering to investigate their effectiveness.

This is not the first time that ACS claims of quackery have been called into question or discredited. A growing number of other innovative therapies originally attacked by the ACS are gaining acceptance. These include hyperthermia, Tumor Necrosis Factor, (originally called Coleys' Toxin), hydrazine sulfate, and Burzynski's antineoplastons. Well over 100 promising alternative nonpatented and non-toxic therapies have already been identified. Clearly, such treatments merit clinical testing and evaluation, with ACS and NCI funds, using similar statistical techniques and criteria as those established for conventional chemotherapy.

Bypassing the blithely unresponsive NCI and ACS, the National Institutes of Health created its own agency, the

Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM), in 1992 to study unconventional approaches to treatment. In 1998, eight years after the OTA's report, Congress upgraded the OAM to an independent institute, The National Center for Complementary Alternative Medicine. Soon thereafter, the Society begrudgingly abandoned its decades-long crusade against "quackery."

When President Nixon launched the war on cancer in 1971, the cancer establishment seized the opportunity to pursue its own narrow self-interest. Its policies and strategies on cancer continue to ignore the essential steps required to wage an effective battle against the disease and remain based on two myths: First, that there has been dramatic progress in the treatment and cure of cancer. Second, that any increase in cancer incidence and mortality is due to an aging population and smoking—discounting evidence that occupational exposures and urban air pollution are also implicated in many cases of lung cancer—while denying any significant role for involuntary and avoidable exposures to industrial carcinogens.

Cancer is preventable. But we'll make little headway if public officials like Al Gore and Dianne Feinstein fail to recognize the importance of prevention and the critical need for drastic, immediate reform. It is time for the cancer establishment to deploy its considerable war chest toward implementing meaningful cancer prevention strategies and eliminating the toxic output of industry. We must put lives before profits. Only then will we begin to make real progress in the war on cancer. □

Boycott the American Cancer Society

With individual donations accounting for 90 percent of the American Cancer Society's budget, the public has considerable power over the future of the world's largest nonreligious "charity." Refuse to donate one more cent to the ACS until it reorders its allocation of personnel and resources to reflect the same commitment to cancer cause and prevention that it has devoted to diagnosis, treatment, basic research—and accumulating wealth. Contribute instead to other organizations directly involved in cancer prevention. Call or write your local and divisional ACS offices and tell the Society to invest its considerable resources in prevention initiatives aimed at reducing exposures to carcinogens in our air, water, food, and consumer products.

Hold the budget of the National Cancer Institute hostage until the agency can demonstrate a major shift in policy and priorities that places prevention research and education initiatives on a parity with other programs. Any budget increases must be contingent on a massive redirection of funds to research and public outreach on avoidable exposures to cancer risks.

For every type of cancer that has increased dramatically over the past forty years—such as childhood brain cancer, breast cancer, testicular cancer, multiple myeloma, to name just a few—the NCI should launch a major research initiative to systematically identify and classify known and suspected risks associated with each cancer. It should then present this thoroughly documented evidence to Congress to recommend appropriate legislative action; to regulatory agencies to formulate effective qualitative and quantitative standards for reducing exposures to carcinogens in our air, water, food, and the workplace; and to the public, with a widespread right-to-know educational campaign, such as full disclosure of the identity and amounts of carcinogenic contaminants contained in products, and warning workers and residents of risks from potential contaminants in their environment.

To ensure compliance with these prevention-based reforms, the NCI should be made directly responsible to the scientific community at large and subject to congressional review and oversight.

Becoming the Body of God

Arthur Waskow

What follows is a meditation that can be used in the morning to awaken and “enspirit” the body, before immersing in a mikveh of spiritual renewal, or at other times. It draws on the interaction of the Sefirot, the kabbalistic image for the Divine Flow of dynamic energy that shapes the universe.

The kabbalists saw these Sefirot as (metaphorically) encoded on the human body in its various energy centers. But the paths between and among the centers are as important as the focus-points themselves. If we are in balance, there is an open flow of energy from each of the points to the others.

By experiencing this energy-flow in the human body and in the bodies of all beings with whom we share the breath of life (especially by going beyond our own bodies to experience it), we can see ourselves as a model of the “Body” of God, made “in God’s Image.” We can find the Sefirot in ourselves—Keter/Crown, Chochma/Wisdom, Binah/Distinctions, Chesed/Love, Gevurah/Strength, Rachamim/Focused Compassion, Netzach/Rhythm, Hod/Splendor, Yesod/Foundation, Malkhut/Majesty.

And we can help ourselves restore our balance and renew the flow wherever we notice it is blocked.

.....

Let yourself become conscious of your body emptied of breath, your lungs small as the tiny letter “yod.” Breathe in: a “heh” sound; feel your chest become tall, like a “vav.” Breathe out again, completing God’s Name—YHWH—with a “heh” again.

And again.

Each breath is the Name of God. And the breathing of all life praises God’s Name.

Now breathe in the world’s breath as your own. Follow your breath as it moves down your throat to your lungs, where the pulsating blood from your heart picks up this breath of life to carry it throughout your body.

Follow the bright red blood, filled with Life-Breath, up

Rabbi Waskow is the author of Godwrestling—Round 2 and the editor of Torah of the Earth (both published by Jewish Lights) and director of The Shalom Center <www.shalomctr.org>. © 2000 by Arthur Waskow. Copies permitted for personal use only.



By experiencing the energy-flow in the human body, we can see ourselves as a model of the “Body of God.”

through the arteries in your throat to your brain.

Lift your hand to about an inch above the crown of your head, feeling the warmth the brain radiates as the warm blood moves through. Feel that place, Keter/Crown, as the interface between your own radiant energy and the radiance of the world. Feel it as the place where your own Will to Create meets the Creative Will of all the universe.

Move your hand to the right side of your head. Follow the Breath of Life, carried in the blood, as it washes every nerve with life. See the flashes of electric excitement in your right brain, the home of flashing intuitive wisdom, Chochma. Feel the fluid, flowing passage of untrammelled wisdom.

Now lift your left hand to the left side of your head. Follow the blood and notice the breath it carries, giving new vigor to the left-brain as it makes distinctions: Either/Or. Yes/No. Right/Left. *Bein u'Vein*, Between and Between. Focus on Binah, your ability to make distinctions.

Sense blood and breath flowing into your right arm, and move your right arm into the world with flowing motions, reaching out with love into the world. Chesed, overflowing

(continued on page 48)

Extinction

Juliana Rose

A call in the night. Not unusual in our house. With the first ring, my husband will pop awake and sprint to our wandering phone—dispatch ambulances, up medicines, counsel patients, family, young doctors. They're schizophrenics, Paul's patients, whom voices and visions pursue regardless of the hour.

Tonight, as usual, Paul races for the call. I hear him knocking into things in the dark. Then a voice on the answering machine: nothing urgent—it can wait till morning. There's more knocking in the living room. Where's the fucking phone, Paul says. His voice sounds funny. Stop crashing around, you klutz, I call. Forget the phone and come back to bed.

Now the kitchen light goes on. More fuck this and that. Fully awake, I go to the kitchen to see what's happening.

A battle with the Tylenol bottle. "What the fuck is wrong with this bottle," Paul says. Actually he says, "Wha the fu wra with thi bol...."

"Stop it!" I call. It's half past three—I want to go back to sleep. Stop joking," I say. "Stop talking like that and making those faces."

"Talky like wha, Dew-ya," he says. "Wha faces." (Talking like what, Julia. What faces.)

Paul is a boyish fifty-three. But now his mouth is sagging. Like an old man's with a stroke, I think. And then, even before I see dribble, I know.

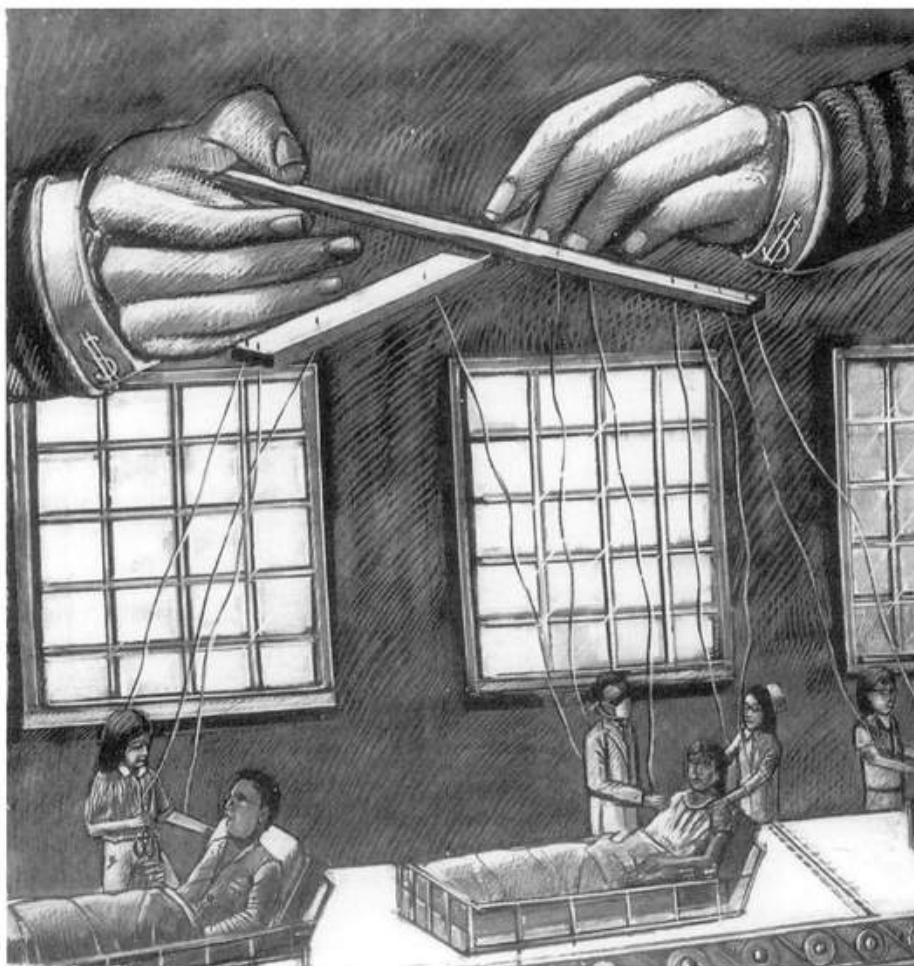
It's not uncommon, of course, for people in the throes of trauma not to know what's happening. Anosognosia is the neurological term, I've learned, for Paul's particular kind of unawareness. The absence of recognition that something's not right.

I say, "Paul, something's wrong."

"Nothing's wrong," Paul says. He's a doctor so he'd know if something were wrong.

Then maybe it's the water for the Tylenol—for the terrible headache—spilling from his flaccid mouth, or the anosognosia ebbing that does it. Somehow, something

Juliana Rose's essays and fiction appear in Partisan Review, The Voice Literary Supplement, and numerous anthologies. "Extinction" is excerpted from her work-in-progress, Night Call.



shifted, and now Paul knows too. And he pulls on clothes, grabs his rolodex and a book—and we go downstairs into the night.

...

Even in the small hours, our city's emergency rooms are crowded and this morning is no exception. Paul works at this hospital, as chief of the Program for the Chronically Mentally Ill, and this morning several of the residents on his service are racing around with early morning crises. They wave him over for advice, but I steer him ahead to an examining room, where he sits and reads, like he's waiting for the oral hygienist. A small posse of residents enter, and Paul beams hello. He knows some of them. He's taught some of them. "So good to see you," he says.

"Lie down, please," a young woman says. Then it's the classic neuro drill. She sticks him with pins and hits him with a rubber hammer and tickles his feet. When she's done, I take his hand.

"He doesn't feel that," she says. "Right, doctor?"

"Feel what?" Paul says.

...

Dr. J, a neurologist we know and like, strides in, his usual cheer collapsed into concern. I hear him saying, "We're seeing a cerebral vascular accident." Blood has been cut off from the right side of the brain—you can tell because it's his left side that he's unaware of, left leg, hand, left dropping cheek. "Left neglect" and "extinction," he says, "neglect" meaning that Paul's unaware of one side—"extinction" that

he doesn't feel one side when he's poked on both. A CAT scan will tell us if there's been a bleed. If not, Dr. J will "heparinize" him—thin his blood and dissolve any clots with heparin, a powerful anticoagulant. Time is of the essence.

And then the CAT scan suite calls—and they take Paul away.

• • •

Identities melt quickly as sickness claims us or those we love. A couple of hours before, I had

marched through the emergency room escorted by my doctor husband, flanked by professional privilege. But now it was as a patient's wife that I begged change of bills at the coffee shop, huddled in an alcove off the lobby making calls on a pay phone, my pocket sagging with quarters. I was slipping to the other side of the world, from the doctor side to the other side, where dread and shame claim you. Where you're afraid to make noise, take up room, stand where people from the healthy side can see you, feeling pity or disgust.

I had calls to make for Paul—appointments to cancel, patients' test results to check, meetings to reschedule. Long-time tenants in the land of the sick, trained by their disease to ask little of life, the patients asked few questions; a few sweetly asked, "Is my doctor all right?" He just needs some rest, I said, closing my eyes. I told his colleagues that Paul was in the hospital with a "neurological event"—a made-up term, I realize now, the brainchild of my desperation. I couldn't yet say stroke—and besides it might not be a stroke, I bargained. Old people had strokes, not middle-aged men in the best of health.

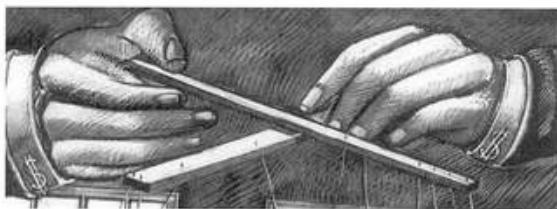
• • •

The CAT scan showed no white area—the mark of a hemorrhage, which would be the worst case scenario. Maybe a clot had traveled from Paul's heart and blocked an artery in the brain, or maybe a bubble of air got lodged, or a piece of arterial plaque. Because there was no hemorrhage, it was safe to hook Paul up with heparin in the hope of preventing any more clots, or dissolving any still around. But they'd have to wait until it was safe to unhook him from the IV before they did an MRI. And so it would be days before they would be able to see the exact nature of the "accident."

In the middle of the morning, Paul's left side suddenly got weaker. And white-faced, Dr. J rushed in, calling, "One day at a time, Juliana. We're going to take it one day at a time." And then I knew we'd crossed over. To the other side of the world. Where you get your days one at a time.

• • •

On the third day of Paul's hospitalization, the MRI showed a big hole in his right temporal lobe—and Paul's accident



*Identities melt quickly
as sickness claims us or
those we love.*

was officially declared a "stroke." The symptoms—slurred speech, left-side weakness, and extinction—would probably reverse, and indeed were beginning to already. But the cause remained disturbingly unclear. With test after test, Dr. J and others pursued their search, but as they discarded theory after theory, no obvious causes emerged.

But Paul's "accident," to those who knew him, seemed no accident at all. My more psychologi-

cally modish friends for years had warned me that Paul was a workaholic on an impossible course. Of course I knew there was some truth to what they said. Wherever he went—even into the cave of sleep—Paul took his work. But I'd always been so proud of this devotion. As a writer and teacher and activist I had my own passions, and was drawn to a certain brand of humanistic fanaticism. Saving lives, like redressing social injustice, depends on "excessive" human engines to push through what most think impossible. And I'd seen close up that patient care was not an arena in which you could set limits easily. "Respect my boundaries"—convey that to patients, especially severely mentally ill patients, and you cut them off. So I endorsed or—as some friends would say—*enabled* Paul's boundless devotion. For twenty-five years I'd been proud to have a husband who knew no limits and imposed few.

• • •

But now I was only horrified. Now, half-paralyzed and weak—except when sleep, or an orderly, took him off—Paul was still working! Flat on his back, he sat his rolodex on his chest, and twirled it frantically like it was a baby roulette wheel, calling out numbers and names, who needed lawyers' letters, EKGs, re-dos of funny blood tests, calls to landlords, priests, courts. And sure that his survival depended on his ceasing all activity, that first day in the ER, I begged him to stop. I said, "Someone else will take care of things—if you don't!" Another piece of my friends' psycho-talk that I'd never believed. "They ith no one elth!" Paul cried. "They cu ha the linth!" (There is no one else! They cut half the lines).

I knew it was true. The department had "thinned" the ranks in recent months, cut half the positions. There really was no one else.

"Doe toe lie a mowa Dew-ya!" (Don't talk like a moron, Julia!)

• • •

Paul's room was darkened to encourage the complete rest that Dr. J had ordered, and in the dark room nurses and doctors and technicians and residents gathered in somber vigil. One of their own had fallen, the first casualty of the

new war, and in the dark they whispered the brutal facts of their recent lives and battles. How playing on public concern about medical coverage and costs, and lobbying both big parties with promises of support, insurance companies and health maintenance corporations had maneuvered themselves into the middle of medicine. A profit-driven corporate army was taking over American healthcare—and even many of the great teaching hospitals, like the one we were in, were becoming occupied territory, living under the conqueror's new rules. *Cut and slash. Cheap is good.* Most fields had been devastated; psychiatry had all but disappeared. Overwhelmingly poor by birth or circumstances, the men-

tally ill had few powerful friends. So cheap was very good, Paul and his friends lamented—quick hospitalizations, shoddy work-ups, no follow-ups, the street.

Sometimes, as Paul slept and his “guard” of colleagues guarded, I’d slip down to the library on the first floor. But I’d manage only a few minutes of reading or writing before dread would seize me, and I’d start searching the shelves for books and articles to save Paul. I’d read about stroke—the risk factors, the physiology, the prognosis. What happened to Paul’s brain and what would happen now and what could be done. I’d read stroke disaster stories, stroke success stories, accounts of celebrity strokes, tales of brain damaged doctors.

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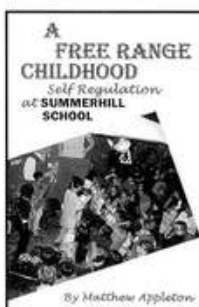
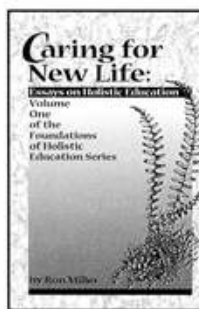
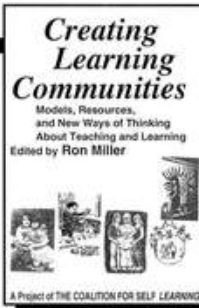
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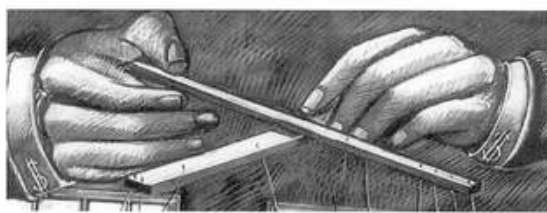
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One morning, in the library basement, I found a whole section of healthcare books, a long row of titles like *Who Gets Sick, Who Gets Well, Getting Sick in America, Getting Well in America, American Hospitals, Hospitals in America*—earnest, boring-sounding volumes I wouldn't have touched when Paul was well. The more I read, the more uneasy I became. The academic health centers are the cornerstones of the American healthcare system, I read, but they are now in danger of obliteration. The insurance companies and HMOs have

taken over most of healthcare, peddling pared-down group policies to large employers. A *Wall Street Journal* writer describes the take-overs and the fears of losing patients that have led even the great medical centers to sign deals with these corporations. The revenues at most non-profit hospitals were down a third; and this was the third that used to go to training and research and care of the poor but now goes to the insurance companies and HMOs. I had read before about managed care, the greedy logic that deems procedures and specialists and services unnecessary, patient care discarded for profit. But I'd never thought about the money gone now from medical schools and non-profit hospitals and what that loss would mean to healthcare—the training, research, care for the growing number of uninsured that would vanish. Paul had called me a moron—and now I saw why!

Paul and his friends had overstated nothing. It was even worse than they said. An invasion—followed by a classic colonization. The “natives” had been forced to give up everything—their resources, their purpose. And like most colonial people, they'd been forced to give up their language—and speak the conqueror's talk. The patient was no longer even called a patient, but an “admission” or a “discharge.” Doctors were “providers” interchangeable with nurse practitioners and other sources of cheaper labor. And the dress had changed with the corporate colonization. Power suits were everywhere, even here in this academic institution—white coats and white hats and blue scrubs the garb of the local help.

Sitting in the carrel, I thought about the take-over of the educational system in the new colony. For decades devoted doctors would learn a new subspecialty, or conduct research, studying every nook and cranny of their chosen organ system, expanding medical knowledge and practice. Now, MDs with a mind to make it up the ladder of corporate-style medicine were getting MBAs. Paul and his friends upstairs—and his closest colleagues over the years at places like Columbia, Stanford, Hopkins, Yale—were altruistic zealots with no concern for big incomes, caring only about patients and



*“If you don’t like it, get out!”
one of the more vicious and
powerful suits would say.
“Get real or get out!”*

research, holding to the highest standards, believing in the best care for the most people.

For a couple of years now, Paul had come home from faculty meetings, reporting how he and a couple of other “dinosaurs” had argued that managed care psychiatry amounted to sub-standard and dangerous medicine. If they put their heads together they could maintain quality, organize creative alliances, hold to the high national standards the institution had helped to develop for a century. It was reckless and cruel to

throw the mentally ill out of the hospital after only a couple of days without proper evaluation and treatment, without a plan for living. “Naive and nostalgic,” the more benign administrators said. “This is the future. If you don’t like it, get out!” one of the more vicious and powerful suits would say. “Get real or get out!”

Saying they wanted the best program possible, the department had recruited Paul two years before. His successes and reputation were considerable: pioneering new antipsychotic medications, he’d helped lift hundreds of patients from the dark pit of madness to the light of everyday life. But once Paul arrived, they’d cut lines, flooded him with more and more patients, provided less and less help.

When Paul finally approached one administrator to get the relief he had promised me he’d ask for, he had expected a sympathetic ear. He’d known Barry, the newly appointed division director, from fellowship days, and if he was suspicious of the MBA Barry had just added to his credentials, he was trusting of his superb medical training and sad spaniel eyes. Paul explained to Barry that he was concerned about the eighteen-hour days, the seven-day work weeks, the lack of back-up. He was bone weary and afraid for his health. Paul had walked into the meeting believing he would hear, “We know you do such a great job—you work too many hours—we’ll get you help!” But Barry said instead: “It’s your own fault.” Paul spent too time with each patient. And he let his patients call him too much, way beyond the per doctor quota the department had contracted for with the call-in service. He’d trained his patients not to call, and Paul should do the same. And Paul kept his patients in the hospital too long. The insurance companies didn’t like that. All in all, Paul’s kind of medicine was inefficient and wasteful, Barry said. He’d have to reform.

Paul tried to explain that his patients were the sickest of the sick. Fast, cheap treatments would bring them right back into the hospital and ultimately crank up costs still more. They were on powerful medicines, with potentially serious side effects. Blood diseases, seizures. And some were suici-

dal, some paranoid. If his patients didn't call him, who knows what could happen!

"Your psychiatry is passé," Barry said. And then: "You need to get with the program.... You don't fit in...."

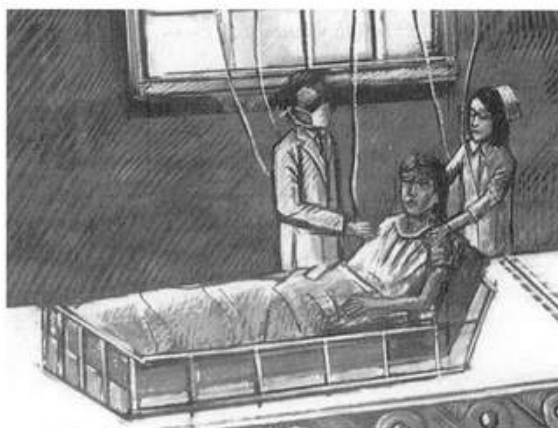
There are going to be accidents, Paul wanted to say. But Barry was reading his mail, a signal to leave.

• • •

The weekend before *his* accident Paul worked late at the hospital both nights, but after he got back home, he still didn't sleep. He was writing and rewriting one of those letters that take everything out of you but you end up never sending, telling Barry all the things he hadn't said but wished he had. How the department could run a quality service—and still come out financially OK. How the department could build strong programs and counter bottom-line medicine. The stuff he'd been saying at meetings for a couple of years—but with an urgent ring. If the department cared about people, about quality patient care, he'd fit in just fine. But if the department wasn't committed to that, he had to know. His first obligation was to good patient care. Draft after draft. As if by phrasing it one more time, he'd convince them at last.

• • •

Dr. R, one of the old-time internists, came by often, with dark rings under his eyes and a stuffed, battered briefcase under his arm. A dinosaur's dinosaur, Paul dubbed him. He's baffled, he told Paul one night. The risk factors didn't add up. Sometimes in a state of excitement a vessel seizes up and throws off a clot; in a state of exhaustion or dehy-



dration, it just closes down. Had Paul been particularly stressed, upset?

Paul shrugs.

Was the truth too painful to tell? Or did Paul's tired mind simply not remember. The nights without sleep. The months without a break. Could that have made Paul sick? And then Barry's words: You don't fit in. And his own anguished unspoken answer: I can't fit in.... I've taken an oath! Could the words

have hurt his brain? Do brains get sick at heart?

"Long days ... the usual," Paul says.

And Dr. R nods, and it looks like he's falling asleep.

• • •

After ten days in the hospital, Dr. J announces that Paul can go home, returning to work after a month of rest. The new MRIs show that Paul's accident involved the right parietal and right temporal lobe—but the damage seems mostly in "silent" areas not affecting functioning. For a while, he might have a little leftover neglect and extinction. He might not know exactly where he ends, Dr. J says.

And I think, has he ever? And isn't blending where we stop and others start an essential in the recipe for compassion? In their Hippocratic Oath doctors pledge to "share their substance" with their teachers, their life and art with their patients, treating "without exception" all who seek their help.

In sickness and in health, I think, my husband keeps his old vows.

Making me scared. Making me proud. □

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Vegetarian Thinking for the Twenty-First Century

Michael Allen Fox

A short while ago, on a television special about research into aging, viewers were offered the opinion that senescence can be conquered: there is no reason in principle, according to some scientists, why we should not live "forever" thanks to the marvels of research. Technology today often seems to be little more than a rudderless impulse, but despite this many still place their trust in such pronouncements, believing that a utopia of material comfort is around the next corner, at least for the select few who are blessed by what philosophers call "moral luck"—favorable circumstances they simply happen to be in through no effort of their own. This privileged position, they suppose, belongs to all of us who dwell in the more affluent part of the world. Apparently it takes a really good crisis to shake us out of this self-assurance, and to make us realize that the preoccupation with longevity and embodied immortality represents yet another escapist fantasy.

Such a crisis is indeed brewing at the present time. It is the pollution of waterways, underground aquifers, and wells by increasing numbers of corporate "megafarms" that seek to capitalize on the seemingly insatiable demand for meat. Such operations (industries rather than farms in any real sense), which house up to 10,000 hogs or cattle, dominate the countryside and generate staggering amounts of toxic organic waste. Recently, six people died and two thousand



Two million children die each year from manure-borne E. coli contamination of drinking water.

were poisoned by an outbreak of E. coli bacterial contamination of the water supply in Walkerton, a small rural town in Canada's largest (and most heavily polluted) province, Ontario. While investigations are still underway, manure runoff from huge factory farms in the region is the probable culprit. A similar major incident occurred in Japan in 1996, when thirteen people died and 20,000 children were made seriously ill. An unsafe or inadequate supply of drinking water is a global problem and getting worse, as the respected Worldwatch Institute well documents in its State of the World 2000 report. Yet even now the United Nations estimates that worldwide two million children die each year from manure-borne E. coli contamination of drinking water.

How many times have we thought, when learning of such catastrophes and statistics, "It can't happen here"? But what can we expect when, for example, 2,500 hogs, producing as much waste as a city of 10,000, are reared together, with inadequate disposal or composting facilities? Wherever these conditions are present, a toxic biological time bomb is waiting to go off. Gigantic cattle conglomerates are also becoming commonplace. Cows produce twenty-two times as much excrement as do humans, and it is estimated that 100 different strains of dangerous E. coli now reside in their bodies, spreading rapidly through herds and entering waterways which, in the United States and Canada, they are often free to roam. Cowardly politicians allow these abuses to continue, and such regulation of megafarms as does exist is often unenforced.

(continued on page 51)

Michael Allen Fox is the author of *Deep Vegetarianism* (Temple University Press, 1999) and other works. He teaches philosophy at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

Chanukah

Honoring the Gentle Transitions in Our Lives

Karyn Berger

As fall rolls into winter, the Jewish calendar turns toward the months of Kislev and the holiday of Chanukah. Over the centuries, Jewish authorities downplayed this holiday, focusing on the “miracle” of the one-day supply of oil that instead burned for eight, teaching us that lighting candles with proper intention helps us dedicate our lives to God. In stark contrast to this peaceful myth of Chanukah lies what we might call the history; the Macabees’ successful revolt over the Greek Syrians—a struggle that took place some 1,500 years ago. Whether this revolt represented an internal civil struggle or an armed insurrection against foreign invaders remains in question. Nevertheless, this struggle resulted in the overthrow of the Greek government and placed the Hasmoneans firmly in the seat of political and religious power in ancient Israel.

How can we find a way to integrate this spiritual myth with the martial victory? Symbolically, lighting candles invites us to contrast the actual physical states of dark and light. If we go one step further, the metaphors that we associate with “light” and “dark” invite us to other contrasts—summer vs. winter, peace vs. war, good vs. evil. But these metaphors invite us to engage in a “spiritual” kind of war. They imply that we can win or lose the struggle of good versus evil.

What is the evil to be banished? For the Macabees, evil was external. This idea, that evil exists outside of ourselves, is alluring, if only because it simplifies the struggles that we encounter in our lives and the world surrounding us. Yet this



approach to good and evil is misleading precisely because it allows us to believe that life and the choices we make are simple. We forget that in reality, light and dark gently transition back and forth from one state to the other, from night to dawn to daylight and back again. The difference lies in the amount of time that each transition takes. By slowing down and appreciating the moments of change, we pay attention to both the contrasts and the transitions. Instead of trying to expel the darkness inside of our hearts and bodies, we can learn to explore our pain and to claim it as our own. We can learn to honor both dark and light, both joy and pain. In doing so, Chanukah can become a path of personal transformation—one that leads us to God as we find the ray of light that shines through the darkness to make our path clear.

Chanukah falls in December, when animals in the northern hemisphere hibernate and those in the southern hemisphere are made drowsy by the strength of the sun. Symbolically, it is a time when it is easy to hide ourselves in an inner darkness. Sometimes, that darkness becomes what we elsewhere call “evil.”

The rabbis teach us that people are not evil by nature. Instead, evil occurs because we ignore the wrongs occurring around us. Think of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. The men of the town attempt to sexually assault one of Lot’s guests. The city is subsequently destroyed. The rabbis ask what happened in these cities to allow such evil to flourish. Their answer is telling: not all the people were evil. In fact, they say, most people just wanted to live their lives. But they could only do this if they stopped caring. The end result? They didn’t pay attention. Because of their apathy,

Karyn Berger is a fourth-year rabbinic student in the Jewish Renewal Movement. She lives in Ann Arbor, where she is active in the Reconstructionist Chavurah and in Pardes Cabna, the Jewish Renewal minyan.

evil flourished. You and I might say that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah “fell asleep.”

When we lose our self-awareness, we lose sight of the fire of our soul. We become unaware of our actions and what we are doing. Because so little in our lives stands out, we drift. We stop paying attention to what we think, say, or do. We go through life as if we are hibernating—asleep. Our souls don’t disappear. Rather, we stop listening, even to our own voice. We lose our connection with ourselves and our own humanity. As a result, we lose our connection to the humanity of others.

This is when evil occurs.

In Hebrew, the word for evil is “rah,” spelled רע. Switch the order of the two letters, ער, and you get the word “or,” which means “spiritual awakening” or awareness. Spiritual awakening also takes place within our selves. We can almost say that evil is the external result of not being internally awake and aware.

One definition of evil, then, is the absence of our selves. When this happens, we fail to feel God’s presence within everything. It is our natural response to try and fill the void. We desperately want to banish things that we fear.

And yet, if we banish everything that we consider evil, we condemn ourselves to never transforming it into something that we can lift up to God. The Hasidic masters teach us that even moments of terrible darkness are a part of God. Our challenge is to find the spark inside of that moment and make it holy. That does not mean that evil acts are not cruel or repugnant—nor does it mean that we should minimize their impact on us or others. It simply means that we have an obligation to take those moments and redeem them so that we (and others) are not further damaged or destroyed by our despair.

The flame that burns inside of our hearts reminds us that we are a part of God. Hopelessness, despair, and pain are all different kinds of darkness that blind us to this light. The more hopeless we feel, the less light we see. We must learn to transmute these lenses so that they become magnifying glasses instead of blinders. In doing this, we can increase the intensity of our own flame and burn even brighter in the world.

When we strike the match or light a Chanukah candle we can’t predict the exact moment when the flame will ignite. So, the flash of light seems very sudden. In fact, however, each spark marks a series of moments transcending from one level to the next as the moment unfolds. And so it is with God and us. By providing light, God enables us to transcend moments of darkness. We make God immanent through our actions. But it is up to us to light the wick of the candle of hope. When we do this, we transcend our humanity because we are no longer only our own agents. We are the hands of God. Like the Chanukah candles, we transcend our darkness and become beings who bring light into the world. □

BECOMING THE BODY OF GOD (continued from page 40)

love. Feel this aspect of your self warm your whole body.

Raise your left arm as a boundary, a barrier between your own self and the world. Palm inward: I am me. Palm outward: You are you. I must strongly preserve some rigorous boundaries: Gevurah.

Put your hands upon your heart. Feel it pulsing as it sends the blood and the breath it carries to renew itself so that it can keep pulsing. Here feel not just a balance-point of overflow and boundary-ness, of Chesed and Gevurah,



but their synthesis into a deeper truth. Your heart: a tough muscle with an opening that pours forth life into your body. Tiferet or Rachamin—*rechem*, the womb, the lower heart that with its tough muscle pulses to pour life into the world.

Now put your weight on your right leg. The marching leg, the perserverant leg, marching with a drumbeat rhythm through eternity, Netzach, Netzach, Netzach, Netzach.

Let your left leg dance lightly on the turning earth. Feel the good-humored skipping of the dancing blood, the dancing breath. Hear melody come pouring in through Hod.

Sense the blood come rushing into the genitals, carrying the life-breath in the flow. The place where all the generations of the past reach out to us, building our Yesod/Foundation. The place we can experience our most intense pleasure, and can choose to reach out to share it with others. Connecting.

Let the tingle of your skin encompass you. Let it bring you together into a Unity, unique. Draw yourself up, knowing deeply the Malkhut/Majesty of your own wholeness.

Now feel the exhausted Breath make its way back from arm and leg, from brain and genital and skin, now carried by the darker blood of weariness. Follow this breath up your throat, follow its journey through your mouth and nose into the open air.

Let your lungs become once more the tiny “yod.”

Follow this breath into a leaf of grass, into the open throats of living tree and burning bush; feel that what you have just breathed out is what the trees breathe in.

Follow what is still your breath as it flows through the tree, the bush, the grasses—leaving behind its carbon to make new leaf, new trunk, new bark. And moving out, now purer oxygen.

Follow your breath as it moves out from these plants, into the other beings of the earth: frog and beetle, horse and hippopotamus—and your own nose and throat. Fill up, breathe deep, heeding the “heh” as the breath rushes inward.

And when you feel the spiral of your breathing most complete, let your eyes come open and connect with the other sacred breathing faces of the Breath of Life. □

From *Gelt* to *Tzedakah*

Lawrence Bush and Jeffrey Dekro



For a festival consigned by the talmudic rabbis to “minor holiday” status, Chanukah has asserted itself over the past generation as a hugely popular folk holiday.

Among contemporary American Jews, menorah-lighting at Chanukah is second only to the Passover seder in popularity (77 percent of Jewish households and 59 percent of intermarrieds light candles; the figures for seders are 86 percent and 68 percent respectively, according to a major Jewish population survey, the 1990 Council of Jewish Federations study).

There are two obvious reasons for this success. First, Chanukah’s largely secular/historical nature spares many Jews the struggle with doubt and ambivalence that they feel during most religious holidays. Second, the gift-giving, *dreidl*-playing, “child-friendly” atmosphere of Chanukah puts it on a par with its competitive twin, Christmas, as a “season to be jolly.” For Christians at Christmas, however, jollity is ideally a channel to generosity—the redemptive kind shown by Jesus to nearly all comers. By contrast, Chanukah speaks of national redemption through ferocious military struggle. What is there in this tradition to turn jollity into generosity—particularly towards the non-Jewish world?

We suggest that the custom of giving Chanukah *gelt*, small gifts of money, be transformed into a major Torah of Money effort during this Festival of Rededication. Each night, a different Chanukah theme can be explored for the purpose of guiding a *tzedakah* decision. By combining end-of-the-tax-year charitable giving with Chanukah themes, families can be true to the rabbinic tradition (which emphasizes both Torah study and *tzedakah* during this season) and greatly heighten the *tikkun olam* element of their observance. For example:

1. Chanukah coincides with the darkest nights of the year and has roots in ancient winter solstice festivals. Devote a discussion to Judaism and ecological issues—and give *tzedakah* to an environmental group.

2. Chanukah embodies its symbolism through foods,

especially fried potatoes (Ashkenazic) and fried dough (Sephardic) to represent the “miracle of oil” at the rededication of the Temple. Talk about the symbolism of food brands and the realities of food budgets. What does it mean to try to feed a family for 63 cents per person per meal (estimate for a family of four living at the federal poverty level of \$15,100)? Give *tzedakah* to a hunger relief project.

3. “Women are obligated to light the Chanukah menorah,” says the Talmud (*Shabbat* 23a), “for they took part in the miracle.” One story tells of the daughter of the high priest, who, facing violation by the Syrian-Greek governor, shames her brothers into revolt. A second story “borrows” the saga of Judith cutting off the head of the Assyrian tyrant Holofernes. Dedicate one night to a discussion of women and resistance—and give *tzedakah* to a feminist organization.

4. Chanukah was truly a minor holiday until the new Zionist movement at the turn of the century began promoting an ideal of self-defense. Talk about the meaning of Jewish self-defense and security today—and give *tzedakah* to an Israeli peace group.

5. The Chanukah menorah is to be publicly displayed in a window or doorway. Discuss the realities of pride and persecution for Jews, gays and lesbians, and other minority groups—and give *tzedakah* to a civil rights organization.

6. Chanukah is briefly debated in the Talmud: Shammai urges lighting the candles in diminishing order, while Hillel urges increasing the light each night. Discuss the role of interpretation and creativity in Judaism—and give *tzedakah* to a Jewish arts or renewal organization.

7. Hannah and her children suffer martyrdom; Mattathias and his children make the revolution. Discuss issues of generational differences and continuity in Jewish life—and give *tzedakah* to a youth-empowering organization.

8. The Miracle of Oil—one day’s worth burning for eight days—is a wonderful metaphor for how human beings must pool resources to create prosperity. Have a discussion about the meaning of community—and give *tzedakah* to a low-income community development project.

In the days of extensive Jewish poverty in Eastern Europe and Lower-East-Side America, Chanukah *gelt* brought a moment of opportunity to children who rarely had a penny of their own. In contemporary times of Jewish prosperity, a reconstructed custom of Chanukah *gelt* can bring moments of insight to both kids and adults, as they spread the light of Maccabean activism to the world beyond. □

Lawrence Bush and Jeffrey Dekro are co-authors of *Jews, Money and Social Responsibility*. They can be reached at The Shefa Fund, info@shefafund.org. *Torah of Money* is a service mark of The Shefa Fund.

WHY YOUR VOTE MATTERS (continued from page 22)

president," but, whatever we might think about the metaphorical truth in her choice of words, she was writing about a feeling that was real.

The impeachment episode as a whole was incredibly revealing of the cultural space between the two parties. Why did the Republicans hate Clinton so and try to use every weapon they could to bring him down? They wanted revenge for Nixon. They were mad he'd outfoxed them time after time. But mostly, emotionally, it was a battle in the culture war: Clinton represented, to them, the turpitude of the Sixties. To people on the Left, the idea that Clinton was an exemplar of the Sixties may seem preposterous. But what matters is that to the Right, he was exactly that; he was their surrogate for everything about the culture they hate, and the jihad against him was, culturally speaking, a throw-down against liberals and progressives and Jews and blacks and gays; New York and Hollywood and moral relativism and bohemia and outré art and everything outside the template of Christian humility, work, family, and minding one's own good old-fashioned business. I can't say for sure what the cultural ramifications would have been if the Republicans had succeeded in removing Clinton from office, but I believe I can say with confidence that they wouldn't have been to my liking or yours, as a reader of this magazine. Clinton won, but more importantly, our tribe won, too.

I write all the foregoing with the authority of one who has withheld his vote from the Democratic standard-bearer from time to time. In fact I didn't vote for Clinton in 1996. In part it was because I was miffed about the welfare bill he'd just signed that fall. But it was also because he was going to carry the state I vote in (New York) by such a huge margin that I knew my little protest would have no consequences.

And speaking of consequences... It is true that there are some, a handful of union or environmental activists, whose commitment to third-party politics is genuine and admirable. But I can't help noticing that the vast majority of the people I hear carrying on about how there's no difference between the parties or how the Democrats are sell-outs, are people for whom election results make no personal difference. Upper-middle-class pundits and academics who counsel the masses to follow them down the path of rejection of the major parties live lives that don't count on the intervention of the federal government in any direct way. They have the luxury of pointing to three or four high-profile issues and pretending there's no difference. A lower-middle-class family that depends on the earned-income tax credit for a few extra dollars or that was able to take advantage of the Family and Medical Leave Act has no such luxury. As I stroll toward the voting booth, I tend to think not of my situation, which will be comfortable enough in either case, but of theirs. And of people who live near a toxic stream or river and await a visit from a bureaucrat who may or may not act on their problem. Through their eyes, the differences are clear enough. □

VEGETARIAN THINKING (continued from page 46)

In addition to these alarming facts, consider what "business as usual" in the meat economy means to the environment, even when we subtract contaminated water supplies from the picture. It requires 12,000 gallons of water to produce a pound of beef, but only 60 gallons to produce a pound of wheat. Enough grain is fed to American livestock annually to feed approximately 800 million people a basic vegetarian diet. It takes between sixteen and twenty units of protein input to yield one unit of protein output in the form



of beef; the ratio of caloric input to output in producing beef for human consumption is placed at ten to one. By these measures, it is easy to see that the production of meat takes an extremely heavy toll on the Earth's ecosystems, represents the squandering of energy, and in general constitutes an irrational allocation of limited planetary resources.

Is there a more sane alternative? Fortunately, the answer is yes: a major shift to vegetarian eating habits would enable humans to live more lightly on the land. This is because all of the negative factors

listed above would be either eliminated entirely or lessened to a significant degree. Within a vegetarian economy, there would be no need for massive beef and pork production and dairy operations could be scaled down. Other features would be better conservation of agricultural and other resources, less environmental damage, and a reduction in our encroachment upon wild animal habitats. There would be other benefits as well: better human health, far less cruelty to animals, and an important and often overlooked peace dividend: a more rational vegetarian system of land use would allow for the possibility of feeding more people adequately on a global scale, which would contribute to a more just, stable, and secure world order. Given that the world's population is growing by 250,000 daily, the vegetarian option gains even greater urgency and appeal.

There is little doubt that one of the most urgent problems that confronts us as we look to the future is our own survival as a species, much as we might prefer to deny this awareness or to bury it by obsessing about longevity. While we possess the technology to take charge of human evolution and that of other life-forms, we are killing the planet. A crisis can awaken us, but only a strategy can give us direction for change. The case for vegetarianism sketched here may be only one part of the strategy we need, but it is one each of us can make in a powerful way. □

ISRAEL

The Israeli-Syrian Impasse

Stephen Zunes

The late Syrian president Hafez al-Assad will be remembered—with justification—for his autocratic rule and hostility towards Israel. Yet he was enough of a pragmatist not only to survive in power for three decades, but to oversee a dramatic shift to a more moderate approach in his country's relations with Israel. The dramatic political and economic changes in the Arab world resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union, the demise of left-leaning Arab nationalist movements, and the increased dominance of the United States post-Gulf War, combined with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and its ongoing peace talks with Israel, has created a situation in which Syria can no longer reap political capital from provoking conflict with Israel.

Meanwhile, on the domestic front, there has been some modest liberalization in Syria—both economically and militarily—and the persecution of that country's Jewish community has lessened considerably. While this presents no great moral shift on the part of the Syrian leadership, it's also true that this liberalizing trend is not going away. The irony of dynastic succession in a supposedly socialist republic aside, Assad's Western-educated son, Bashar, thus far appears to be consolidating his power and, while not about to give in to Israeli demands, is very sensitive of the need to open his country to the West. He knows this requires peace with Israel. Also, as with most Arab leaders, his concern about the Palestinians is largely for propaganda purposes; he would have no problem making a separate peace with Israel, leaving Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian leadership to fend for themselves.

The one obstacle to Israeli-Syrian peace that remains is the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Golan region of southwestern Syria, which has been under Israeli military occupation for over thirty-three years. (Israel took the Golan during the 1967 war, and has kept it on the pretext of "security concerns.") Israelis cite the fact that between 1948 and 1967, Syrian gunners would periodically lob shells from the Golan Heights into civilian areas within Israel.

Stephen Zunes is an associate professor of politics and chair of the Peace & Justice Studies Program at the University of San Francisco. He has met with both Israeli and Syrian foreign ministers and has visited both sides of the Golan.



However, according to UN peacekeeping forces stationed along the border during that period, Israel engaged in far more cease-fire violations and inflicted far greater civilian casualties than did Syria. As hard as it is for many to believe, Syrians have been at least as scared of Israel as Israelis have been of Syria. Indeed, Israel has bombed Damascus on several occasions, yet Syria has never successfully attacked Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, or any other major Israeli city.

Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan acknowledged in his diaries in 1967 that there was no clear strategic rationale for taking over Syrian territories, and he later admitted to an Israeli reporter that the Golan was seized out of greed for its waters and fertile farmland. Many contemporary Israeli strategic analysts agree. Today, without Soviet support, Syrian military power has fallen dramatically even as Israel's has been further strengthened, in large measure with U.S. assistance. Indeed, in this era of medium-range missiles, controlling high ground such as the Golan Heights would not yield Syria a significant military advantage. Despite this—and despite Israel's unprecedented military advantage—successive Israeli governments have convinced much of the Israeli public and Israel's supporters elsewhere in the world that retaining this territory is critical to Israel's survival. The challenge for the government of Ehud Barak is to convince the Israeli people that they were misled and that retaining the Golan was never actually essential.

Increasing numbers of Israelis in recent years have recognized that peace with the Palestinian people involves the moral obligation of the stronger party to rectify injustice against the weaker party. The horrific violence by some Palestinians against Israeli civilians over the years can never be justified, but can be understood in the light of their suffering. However, Syria's longstanding hostility towards Israel, including its support of radical terrorist groups

purged by the mainstream of the Palestine Liberation Organization, is harder to understand. The ongoing anti-Semitic propaganda in the government-run media and educational systems is also a cause of concern. Finally, the fact that Syria still has a sizable standing army with a strong state apparatus makes it a far more credible threat than would a small, weak, and largely demilitarized Palestinian state. As a result, the Israeli peace movement has never given much priority to pushing for withdrawal from Syria and, similarly, Israeli public opinion supporting withdrawal has lagged way behind those open to Palestinian self-determination.

The reality, however, is that a peace agreement with Syria is far easier in many respects than a final peace agreement with the Palestinians since it involves a long-established internationally recognized nation-state and is centered around rather straightforward security issues. Still, peace with Syria, for the time being, continues to be just out of reach. Many Israelis—along with many Jews in the Diaspora—are having a hard time abandoning the idea of Israel as a potential victim. While the country's security situation in its early years was indeed precarious, it has been decades since Syria or any other Arab country or combination of Arab countries has posed a genuine security threat to Israel.

Given the autocratic nature of the Syrian regime and Israel's longstanding democratic institutions and pro-Western orientation, there has been an understandable assumption that Syria has been the more intransigent of the two parties since the peace process began in Madrid in 1991. This perspective is compounded by the fact that for most of Israel's history, the Syrians refused to negotiate, financed terrorist groups that attacked Israeli civilians, and sought Israel's destruction. Israelis have long questioned the Zionist credentials of any of their fellow citizens who talked of returning land to Syria in exchange for security guarantees. Yet, until recently, the actual strategic value of the Golan was rarely examined.

Syria's position in recent years has actually been consistent with UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which call on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories in return for security guarantees. For several years, the Syrian government has offered to demilitarize the Golan, allow for international monitors, sign a non-aggression pact, and take other measures in return for getting their land back. Yet, even with the guarantee that there would be no Syrian forces in the Golan, Israel has not been ready to withdraw.

Instead, Israel has insisted that Syria also be willing to establish full diplomatic and economic relations. While these are certainly reasonable goals for Israeli policy makers to pursue, they are not—legally speaking—necessary prerequisites for Israel's withdrawal. Nor is Israel's continued insistence on access to Syrian water resources. Despite this, according to reports in the Israeli press, Syria had essentially agreed to these demands as well. Now, however, the Israelis appear unwilling to totally withdraw to their inter-

nationally-recognized borders even with these conditions; the Israelis are offering to pull back only as far as an old boundary drawn by French and British colonialists in 1923, unfavorable to the Syrians in that it would deny them access to Lake Tiberius. As a result, the Syrians—and many international observers as well—believe that the Israelis have essentially been moving the goal posts, taking advantage of Syria's relative weakness and the unwillingness of the United States to push them to live up to their international obligations to withdraw.

Unlike the West Bank and Gaza, where Israeli troops have had to contend with a large hostile population under their control, Syrian Arabs were expelled from the Golan in 1967. Counting descendants, as many as 300,000 remain refugees in their own country. Only five villages remain, consisting of members of the Druze minority. These Druze villagers engaged in a Gandhian-style nonviolent resistance against the occupation in the early 1980s, only to be suppressed harshly by Israeli forces. Unlike most Druze within Israel itself, who have generally been loyal to the Jewish state, the Druze community of the Golan overwhelmingly desires a return to Syrian governance.

Meanwhile, more than 15,000 Israeli settlers have colonized the Golan in defiance both of international law—which prohibits the transfer by the occupying power of land seized by military force to the occupier's citizenry—and of explicit United Nations Security Council resolutions. Unlike the Jewish settlers on the West Bank, many of whom claim strong religious and historical ties to the region, settlers in the Golan have less emotional attachment to the land and are there more for financial gain and the region's scenic beauty. As a result, despite the protests of a small right-wing minority among them, these settlers could probably be coaxed to leave through generous financial incentives and other government efforts short of forced expulsion.

Barak's decision to withdraw Israeli troops from Lebanon in May appears to have demonstrated that such risks are indeed worth taking. Despite angry mobs demonstrating along the border, most Israelis now recognize that their withdrawal from Lebanon gave the country more security than trying to maintain a "security zone" against a population who saw them as occupiers. The dire predictions by successive Israeli governments that such a withdrawal would put the country in peril have proved for naught. Indeed, a willingness to go through with a total withdrawal would mean that Israel would finally be at peace with all its immediate neighbors, a goal for which Israel has desperately yearned since its creation. Indeed, should Israel make peace with Syria, it would also likely make peace with Lebanon, whose foreign relations has essentially been controlled by Damascus since the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990. In effect, Israel can have the Golan or it can have peace; it cannot have both. Thus, Israel would be far more secure without the Golan than with it.

Though Barak and much of Israel's military leadership recognize the benefits of peace with Syria, right-wingers have been vocally opposed. Their arguments are weak, focusing primarily on the dictatorial nature of the Syrian regime and how it is a government which cannot be trusted. Both are true, of course, but neither are relevant to the draft agreement, which grants a strong role for international monitors and leaves a broad swath of Syrian land where Syrian forces would be barred or restricted. Unfortunately, the Clinton administration has been reluctant to push the Israelis to compromise. Indeed, the U.S. has consistently blamed Syria for the failure of the peace talks, leaving Barak vulnerable to charges that he is giving in too much to an intransigent foe.

The United States has put enormous pressure on Syria to compromise. The Clinton administration continues to include Syria on its list of "terrorist states," even though the State Department has admitted that they have no evidence that the Syrian government has been linked to any terrorist attacks since 1986. Being on the list denies Syria access to foreign aid and certain high-technology imports. The United States has offered to remove Syria from its list only if it makes peace with Israel largely on U.S.-Israeli terms, yet another demonstration of how the terrorist designation has become a vehicle for advancing policy interests rather than an accurate assessment of a given country's behavior.

It is unlikely that U.S. policy will shift in an election year, given the false but widely-held belief that Jewish voters in the United States are a monolith opposing U.S. pressure on the Israeli government even when it is in Israel's best interests. The peace talks will not be successful, however, until the United States is willing to recognize the enormous progress Syria has made towards making peace with Israel and to take an active part in resolving the impasse in the negotiations. In order to play a reasonably constructive role, the United States has to approach the talks from the perspective of upholding United Nations Security Council resolutions, international law, and the long-term stability of the region, and not succumb to its ideological and geopolitical biases. Thus far, the United States has failed to do this.

Indeed, as with Lebanon and the Palestinians, Israel's Labor government has already taken far more dramatic steps towards peace with Syria than the Democrats in Washington initially appeared ready to support. As with other tracks in the peace process, the Clinton administration has not taken a middle ground between Israel and the Arab parties, but has actually taken a position to the right of successive Labor governments. Within Israel, in between the ideological hawks and ideological doves, are large numbers of Israelis who would support compromise if to do otherwise would damage

relations with the United States, but are willing to support an ongoing occupation if they know the largesse of U.S. aid will continue unconditionally anyway. Perhaps it is time for some "tough love," raising the prospect of cutting back on aid unless there is a total Israeli withdrawal.

So far, however, the question has only been about increasing aid to Israel as a result of an Israeli-Syrian peace deal. Currently the Clinton administration is reportedly willing to spend up to \$17 billion to support a Syrian-Israeli peace agreement. Yet it is doubtful that such a sum would promote

peace. As much as \$10 billion would go to relocate Israeli settlers in the Golan. Not only is the price tag of approximately \$650,000 per settler excessive, but there are serious questions as to whether Israel should be given money to relocate settlers who built homes illegally on other people's land in violation of international law and United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Much of the remaining money would come in the form of additional military aid to Israel, adding still more

sophisticated armaments to an already militarized region and burdening Israel with the costs of additional personnel, training, and spare parts. Similar increases in U.S. arms to the region followed peace agreements between Israel and Egypt and between Israel and Jordan. The United States also sent an additional \$1.4 billion in military assistance to Israel in 1999 as part of the Wye River Agreement of the previous year, the vast majority of which was unrelated to Israel's modest redeployment. Instead, the United States should insure that these long-overdue peace agreements result in the demilitarization of the region, as has been the case with most peace treaties historically. The United States should use the peace process as an opportunity to get serious about arms control rather than as an excuse to further subsidize American arms exporters.

Syria is not in as weak a position economically as was Egypt in 1978, the PLO in 1993, or Jordan in 1994 and is therefore unlikely to compromise further. Yet the new Syrian leadership appears willing to continue pursuing the negotiations. The Israeli government is also closer than ever to making the necessary compromises for peace. While it is easy to blame one side or the other for the current impasse, it is the lack of leadership in the U.S. government in the peace process which deserves greater scrutiny. In the pursuit of a Pax Americana, real opportunities for peace—as there was last spring between Israel and Syria and this summer between Israel and the Palestinian Authority—have been missed. It may be time for Americans who share a vision of real peace and real security for Israel and its neighbors take a more active stance in challenging the U.S. role in the peace process. □

In effect, Israel can have the Golan or it can have peace; it cannot have both. Thus, Israel would be far more secure without the Golan than with it.

A War Against Boys?

Michael Kimmel

By now, you've probably heard there's a "war against boys" in America. The latest heavily-hyped right-wing fusillade against feminism, led by Christina Hoff Sommers's new book of that title, claims that men are now the second sex and that boys—not girls—are the ones who are in serious trouble, the "victims" of "misguided" feminist efforts to protect and promote girls' development. At the same time, best-selling books by therapists, like William Pollack's *Real Boys* and Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson's *Raising Cain*, also sound the same tocsin, warning of alarming levels of depression and suicide among boys, and describing boys' interior lives as an emotionally barren landscape, with all affect suppressed beneath postures of false bravado. They counsel anguished parents to "rescue" or "protect" boys—not from feminists but from a definition of masculinity that is harmful to boys, girls, and other living things.

In part, they're both right. There *is* a crisis among boys. But the right-wing jeremiads misdiagnose the cause of the crisis and thus their proposed reforms would take us even further away from enabling young boys to negotiate the difficult path to a manhood of integrity, ethical commitment, and compassion. At least the therapists get that part right. But, in part, both sides are also wrong: on most measures boys—at least the middle class white boys everyone seems concerned about—are doing just fine, taking the places in an unequal society to which they have always felt entitled.

The Boy Crisis

Let's begin with the evidence of crisis. The signs are everywhere. Boys drop out of school, are diagnosed as emotionally disturbed, and commit suicide four times more often than girls; they get into fights twice as often; they murder ten times more frequently and are fifteen times more likely to be the victims of a violent crime. Boys are six times more likely to be diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder. Boys get lower grades on standardized tests of reading and writing, and have lower class rank and fewer honors than girls.

Michael Kimmel is the author of *Manhood in America* and, most recently, *The Gendered Society* (Oxford University Press). He teaches sociology at SUNY Stony Brook.



On college campuses, women now constitute the majority of students, passing men in 1982, so that in eight years women will earn 58 percent of bachelor's degrees in U.S. colleges. Doomsayers lament that women now outnumber men in the social and behavioral sciences by about 3 to 1, and they've "invaded" such traditionally male bastions as engineering (where they now make up 20 percent of all students) and biology and business (virtually par).

Elementary schools, we hear, are "anti-boy," emphasizing reading and restricting the movements of young boys. They "feminize" boys, forcing active, healthy, and naturally rambunctious boys to conform to a regime of obedience, "pathologizing what is simply normal for boys," as one psychologist put it. Michael Gurian argues in *The Wonder of Boys* that despite the testosterone surging through their little limbs, we demand that boys sit still, raise their hands, and take naps. We're giving them the message, he says, that "boyhood is defective."

According to Christina Hoff Sommers, it's "misguided feminism" that's been spreading such calumnies about boys. It's boys, not girls, who face the much-discussed "chilly classroom climate," according to Sommers. Schools are an "inhospitable," hostile environment for boys, where their natural propensities for rough and tumble play, competition, aggression, and rambunctious violence are cast as social problems in the making.

"Misguided" feminists have ignored the natural biological differences between boys and girls, and, in their fear and loathing of all things masculine, have demeaned an entire sex. Sommers quotes a line from a speech by Gloria Steinem that "we need to raise boys like we raise girls." (In fact, she

quotes it three times in her short, but repetitive book.) She vilifies William Pollack, author of *Real Boys*, and others (including myself) for our efforts to “save the males”—to rescue boys from the dangerous myths of masculinity. Boys, she argues, are simply different from girls, and efforts to transform time-tested and beneficial definitions of masculinity will run counter to nature’s plan. Categorical differences are “natural, healthy, and, by implication, best left alone.”

On the other hand, Sommers reserves her fiercest animus for Carol Gilligan, whose work on girls’ development suggests that there is more than one moral voice which guides people in their ethical decision-making, and who has explored the ways in which girls lose their voice as they approach adolescence. In fact, Sommers is so filled with misplaced rage at Gilligan that one is tempted to speculate about her motives, accusing Gilligan of ethical impropriety in her research, duplicity, intellectual fraud, and deceptive cover-ups. (This because Gilligan won’t show her raw field notes and interview transcripts to some smarmy Harvard undergraduate who did not identify himself as working for Sommers.)

But Sommers goes after Gilligan precisely because Sommers believes (based on a misreading of the work) that Gilligan posits categorically different moral voices for boys and girls. Here, Sommers offers evidence that the differences between boys and girls are minimal. When she discusses boys’ aggression, those same testosterone-propelled, hard-wired, natural sex differences magically disappear. “[S]chool problems have very little to do with misogyny, patriarchy, or sex discrimination,” she writes. “They have everything to do with *children’s* propensity to bully and be cruel” (my italics).

So which is it? She attacks the therapists for failing to recognize the hard-wired differences between the sexes, but then excoriates Gilligan for crediting those same differences.

Misguided Anti-Feminism as Misdiagnosis

Anyone who has kids in school today knows that some of this appears true: some boys seem defensive, morose, unfocused, taciturn, and withdrawn, while the girls in their classes seem to be sailing on towards bright and multifaceted futures, performing science experiments, playing soccer, and delivering valedictory addresses. So, what’s wrong with Sommers’ picture?

In addition to its internal contradictions, Sommers and the boys-as-victims crowd make several key errors. For one thing, though driven to distraction by numbers, Sommers, Gurian, and others never factor in the number zero—as in zero dollars for new public school programs, the dearth of

school bond issues that have passed, the absence of money from which might have developed remedial programs, intervention strategies, teacher training. Money which might have prevented cutting school sports programs and after-school extracurricular activities. Money which might have enabled teachers and administrators to do more than “store” problem students in separate classes. Far larger portions of those school budgets go towards programming for boys (special education, school sports) than for girls. So much for feminization. (This mirrors apparent national priorities: we can’t

seem to pass any school bond issues, but we’ll tax ourselves into the next millennium to build a new sports stadium.) Nor do they mention managed care health insurance, which virtually demands that school psychologists diagnose problem behavior as a treatable medical condition so that drugs may be substituted for costly, “unnecessary” therapy.

And what about the numbers of boys going to college? Well, for one thing, more people are going to college than ever before. In 1960, 54 percent of boys and 38 percent of girls went directly to college; today the numbers are 64 percent of boys and 70 percent of girls. And while some college presi-

dents fret that to increase male enrollments they’ll be forced to lower standards (which is, incidentally, exactly the opposite of what they worried about twenty-five years ago when they all went coeducational) no one seems to find gender disparities going the other way all that upsetting. Of the top colleges and universities in the nation, only Stanford sports a 50-50 gender balance. Harvard and Amherst enroll 56 percent men, Princeton and Chicago 54 percent men, Duke and Berkeley 52 percent and Yale 51 percent. And that doesn’t even begin to approach the gender disparities at Cal Tech (65 percent male, 35 percent female) or MIT (62 percent male, 38 percent female). Nor does anyone seem driven to distraction about the gender disparities in nursing, social work, or education. Did somebody say “what about the girls?” Should we lower standards to make sure they’re gender balanced?

Much of the gender difference offered is actually what sociologist Cynthia Fuchs Epstein calls a “deceptive distinction,” a difference that appears to be about gender but is actually about something else—in this case, class or race. Girls’ vocational opportunities are far more restricted than boys’ are. Their opportunities are from the service sector, with limited openings in manufacturing or construction. A college-educated woman earns about the same as a high-school educated man, \$31,000 to \$35,000. Note, too, that the shortage of male college students is actually a shortage of *non-white* males. The actual gender gap between college-age white males and white females is rather small, 51 percent women to 49 percent men. But only 37 percent of



black college students are male compared with 63 percent female, and only 45 percent of Hispanic students are male, compared with 55 percent female.

These differences among boys—by race or class, for example—do not typically fall within the radar of the cultural critics who would rescue boys. These differences are incidental because, in their eyes, all boys are the same: aggressive, competitive, rambunctious little devils. They argue that testosterone makes boys into boys, and that our society fails by making it impossible for boys to be boys.

Now, personally, I find those words, “boys will be boys” (which, incidentally, are the final four words of Sommers’ book) to be four of the most depressing words in policy circles today, because they suggest resignation, a hopeless throwing up of the hands. If boys will be boys, then there is simply nothing we can do about it.

Rethinking Masculinity

“Masculinity is aggressive, unstable, combustible,” writes Camille Paglia, whom Sommers quotes approvingly, in one of the most insulting—yes, male-bashing—definitions available. Are we hard-wired only for aggression and competition? Are we not also hard-wired for compassion, nurturance, love?

The therapists (Pollack, Kindlon, and Thompson) understand that what lies beneath boys’ problems (apparent or

real) is an outdated ideology of masculinity to which boys are struggling desperately to adhere, and which is applied ruthlessly and coercively by other boys.

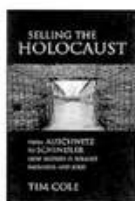
For example, the reason it appears that boys are lagging behind in reading and languages is not because of feminist efforts to improve the lives of girls, nor even because testosterone inhibits the memorization of French syntax. It’s about an ideology of masculinity.

Consider the parallel for girls. Gilligan’s often moving work on adolescent girls describes how these assertive, confident, and proud youngsters “lose their voices” when they hit adolescence. At the same moment, Pollack notes, boys become *more* confident, even beyond their abilities. You might even say that boys *find* their voices, but it is the inauthentic voice of bravado, of constant posturing, of foolish risk-taking and gratuitous violence. The Boy Code teaches them that they are supposed to be in power, and thus begin to act like it. They “ruffle in a manly pose,” as William Butler Yeats once put it, “for all their timid heart.”

What’s the cause of all this posturing and posing? It’s not testosterone, but privilege. In adolescence both boys and girls get their first real dose of gender inequality: girls suppress ambition, boys inflate it.

Recent research on the gender gap in school achievement bears this out. Girls are more likely to undervalue their abilities, especially in the more traditionally “masculine”

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educational arenas such as math and science. Only the most able and most secure girls take such courses. Thus, their numbers tend to be few, and their grades high. Boys, however, possessed of this false voice of bravado (and many facing strong family pressure) are likely to *over value* their abilities, to remain in programs though they are less qualified and capable of succeeding.

This difference, and not some putative discrimination against boys, is the reason that girls' mean test scores in math and science are now, on average, approaching that of boys. Too many boys who over value their abilities remain in difficult math and science courses longer than they should; they pull the boys' mean scores down. By contrast, the few girls whose abilities and self-esteem are sufficient to enable them to "trespass" into a male domain skew female data upwards.

A parallel process is at work in the humanities and social sciences. Girls' test scores in English and foreign languages outpace boys not because of some "reverse discrimination," but because the boys bump up against the norms of masculinity. Boys regard English as a "feminine" subject. Pioneering research in Australia by Wayne Martino found that boys are uninterested in English because of what it might say about their (inauthentic) masculine pose. "Reading is lame, sitting down and looking at words is pathetic," commented one boy. "Most guys who like English are faggots." The traditional liberal arts curriculum is seen as feminizing; as Catharine Stimpson recently put it sarcastically, "real men don't speak French."

Boys tend to hate English and foreign languages for the same reasons that girls love it. In English, they observe, there are no hard and fast rules, but rather one expresses one's opinion about the topic and everyone's opinion is equally valued. "The answer can be a variety of things, you're never really wrong," observed one boy. "It's not like math and science where there is one set answer to everything." Another boy noted:

I find English hard. It's because there are no set rules for reading texts.... English isn't like math where you have rules on how to do things and where there are right and wrong answers. In English you have to write down how you feel and that's what I don't like.

Compare this to the comments of girls in the same study:

I feel motivated to study English because ... you have freedom in English—unlike subjects such as math and science—and your view isn't necessarily wrong. There is no definite right or wrong answer and you have the freedom to say what you feel is right without it being rejected as a wrong answer.

It is not the school experience that "feminizes" boys, but rather the ideology of traditional masculinity that keeps

boys from wanting to succeed. "The work you do here is girls' work," one boy commented to a British researcher. "It's not real work."

Ideologies of masculinity are reinforced ruthlessly on playgrounds and in classrooms all across the country. Boys who do like school, or who don't like sports, or who dress or act "different," are often subject to a constant barrage of insults, harassment, beatings. School may become an interminable torment. Students at Columbine High School described how the jocks beat up Eric Harris every day. This isn't playful rambunctious rough and tumble play: it's

harassment, and is actionable under the law. And if masculinity is so "natural" and hard-wired, why does it have to be enforced with so much constant coercion?

Efforts to improve boys' lives in school will either adequately address the cultural—not natural—equation of masculinity and anti-intellectualism or they will fail.

And that leads to the final and most telling problem with these works: They assert a false opposition between girls and boys, pretending that the educational reforms undertaken to enable girls to perform better actually hindered boys' educational development. But these reforms—new initiatives, classroom configurations, teacher training, increased attentiveness to students' processes and individual learning styles—actually enable larger numbers of boys to get a better education. As Susan McGee Bailey and Patricia Campbell point out, "gender stereotypes, particularly those related to education, hurt both girls and boys," while the challenging of those stereotypes, decreased tolerance for school violence and bullying, and increased attention to violence at home actually enables *both* girls and boys to feel safer at school.

Since Sommers quotes Gloria Steinem's statement no less than three times, out of context, it might be interesting to conclude with what Steinem actually did say:

We've begun to raise our daughters more like sons—so now women are whole people. But fewer of us have the courage to raise our sons more like daughters. Yet until men raise children as much as women do—and are raised to raise children, whether or not they become fathers—they will have a far harder time developing in themselves those human qualities that are wrongly called "feminine."

Hardly a call for androgyny—she seeks to degender traits, not people—Steinem reminds us of the most vital connection between parents and children, the centrality of caring, nurturing parenting as the fulfillment of our ethical responsibilities, and suggests that the signal success of feminism has been to raise girls to become competent, confident, and strong-minded. Would that our boys could achieve those traits. □

*If masculinity is so
"natural" and hard-wired,
why does it have to be
enforced with so much
constant coercion?*

America From the Waist Down

Andrew Bachman

In his quest for the Nobel Prize in Literature, Philip Roth may now be able to claim that he is not only a great writer—he's a prophet to boot. In the opening chapter of his recent novel, *The Human Stain*, Roth casts vice-presidential candidate Senator Joseph Lieberman as the righteous protector of American values and sexual ethics in the midst of the President Clinton-Monica Lewinsky scandal of 1998.

Not much was made of Lieberman's cameo in the novel when it appeared earlier this past summer, most certainly because Vice President Gore had yet to pick him as his running mate—a move most observers have applauded as a brilliant strategy for helping Gore distance himself from President Clinton in the fall campaign for the White House. Lieberman's voice was used by Roth as an example of an almost Puritan, sanctimonious condemnation for a private sexual indiscretion that was really only the business of the President and his family (and of course, Ms. Lewinsky). Early in the book Roth sets an unmistakable tone: my prostate may be gone, but I'm still going to give it to people, real good. Like the phantom shake of Elvis Presley's censored hips and his mischievous smile on television broadcasts in the 1950s, Roth makes the most of his newly limited state.

The *Human Stain* chronicles the life of Coleman Silk, as told to recovering cancer patient Nathan Zuckerman. Holed up in his country home, freed from the shackles of male potency and left alone to write in blessed solitude, Zuckerman comes to learn of the incredible and nearly implausible turn of events that is the life of Professor Coleman Silk. Silk is a Jewish Classics instructor at the fictional Athena College. Neatly tucked away in the pristine surroundings of the Berkshires, Athena is, like many liberal arts colleges in the Nineties, yet another stage upon which the fight over political correctness is being played out as a tragic drama. Upon this stage, Silk ambles into a lecture hall and asks about two absent students, "Do they exist or are



Roth places Jewishness in the background and brings race and skin color to the fore.

they spooks?" Though clearly referring to their ghostly absence and not to their skin color, Silk is tried and forced to resign his position in a PC witch hunt that brands him an insensitive racist. While he is on trial, his wife dies of a stroke and Silk begins a torrid love affair with a campus janitor, a woman younger than Silk by nearly thirty years. The fallen professor is now further tainted by his association with Berkshire "white trash." In his effort to set the record straight and tell his side of the story, Coleman Silk enlists Zuckerman as his ghostwriter. And we, Roth's lucky readers, are off to the races.

What a race it is. Zuckerman, the Newark native, learns that Silk in fact is not Jewish but black. In a surprising but profound twist of literary fate for this chronicler of American Jewish identity, Roth turns the tables on identity

Andrew N. Bachman is Skirball Director of the Edgar M. Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life: Hillel at New York University. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife and two children.

politics and recreates Silk's life in lower middle-class black Newark. Rather than using his pen to sketch out the bargains made and the consequences wrought for a generation of American Jews' attempts to assimilate and succeed in their quest for acceptance, Roth places Jewishness in the background and brings race and skin color to the fore.

By virtue of *The Human Stain's* setting in the charged, politically correct world of the Nineties college campus, and its humorous and biting references to the Clinton impeachment trial, reviewers have been quick to categorize the book as the closing statement of an imagined Roth trilogy about the past American half-century. In less than a decade, Roth has crafted *American Pastoral*, set to the chaotic rhythms and protests of the Sixties; *I Married a Communist*, the story of another teacher run from his position in the Cold War heat of the McCarthy era; and *The Human Stain*.

Roth has much to say about these eras. In *American Pastoral*, Roth dissects the pained assimilationist impulse of one Swede Levov, the jock-hero of Zuckerman's Newark high school, who does everything right only to find that the turbulence of the times and the dissonance of suburban values are not quite ready and willing to accept this heroic, well-behaved Jew. (Historians from the late venerated George L. Mosse to the younger generation of cultural historians like Steve Zipperstein and Michael Berkowitz have all referenced Roth in their work as *the* literary example for these tensions among assimilating American Jewry.) The clouded atmosphere of this protest-laden time is mere backdrop for Roth's deeper exploration of Jewish identity at the critical juncture when Jews are moving into the suburbs and assimilating into the life and times of America at a speedy rate. In *American Pastoral*, the title belies the tumult depicted in its pages while also playing with the idea that as Jews find greater success in the American socio-economic scale, it often comes at a risk to their very identity.

While *I Married a Communist* riffs on the Fifties, McCarthyism, and, as some would have it, Roth's relationship with Claire Bloom, *The Human Stain* shifts to the Nineties and chronicles not Jewish fate so much as identity in general and the competing orthodoxies of political correctness and meritocracy on the American college campus.

If *American Pastoral* and *I Married a Communist* were not particularly funny novels, *The Human Stain* has the distinct advantage of being both serious and hilarious. Not only has Roth come up with an outlandish way of exposing a certain hypocrisy in the movement for political correctness, he has found a way to turn all expectations topsy-turvy that is reminiscent not only of the descriptive power of Henry James but the dadaist and satirical bite of the Marx

Brothers. If this doesn't seal the deal for Roth's bid for the Nobel Prize, what will?

But there are spooks in the house that Roth built. Just beneath the surface of *The Human Stain* is our own awareness of Roth's battle with prostate cancer—and this reality is given voice in the book by Zuckerman suffering a similar fate. Rather than representing a merely political take on the past American half-century, Roth makes a different case altogether and is perhaps making sense of his own sexual fate as the American Jewish novelist much maligned for

putting male Jewish eros, sexuality, and masturbation on the radar screen of American Jewish literature. Looking back on the last fifty years of his own writing, this book, the first written without a prostate, gives us a Roth with the same incisive wit but more comfortable in his solitary, de-sexualized aloneness.

When religious figures dare to go into the solitude of the wilderness, they encounter visions of prophecy and clairvoyance to share with the world. So much of Roth's work has evoked not the

The inexorable stain of humanness means we can never escape the essential, the elemental aspects of our deeper, darker, inner selves.

quiet and the contemplative, but the cacophony of community: the particularistic Jewish middle-class home in the last gasps of its ethnic enclave of Newark, New Jersey; the pressures beneath the quest for assimilation and acceptance; the tumult of sexual identity and the lure of the *shiksa*; and the challenge and defiance of Zionism's New Jewish Male. All have been present in some form or another in nearly all of Roth's work over much of his career. But in *The Human Stain*, he universalizes the particular, by exploring Jewish *otherness* through the character of a black man. The moral of the story, the meaning behind the title of the book, is precisely this: that the inexorable stain of humanness means we can never escape the essential, the elemental aspects of our deeper, darker, inner selves. As Roth describes it, no matter how much you think you know a person, you never really do. This was true for Coleman Silk, a black man posing as a Jew, even to his entire family; it was true for Faunia Farley, white, working-class janitorial help at Athena College; and it is true for you and me. By including the very public troubles of President Clinton in the plot of *The Human Stain*, Roth is telling us that it's true for the president as well.

In fact, while the president only appears in a few brief passages, his presence haunts much of the book. Clinton's public battle with his eros, his shameful behavior in the eyes of some (like Senator Lieberman) or his utter humiliation to others, leaves no alternative but explains, on a deeper level, why Roth makes not just a passing reference to the affair but rather uses it to punctuate a series of grander statements about the peculiar American expectation for sexual purity and chastity in our leadership.

Eros has doggedly trailed Roth throughout his career. Try

bringing him up to a younger generation of readers. They will know little of his profound insights into American Jewish identity, of hard-working and broken Jewish fathers, of unrelenting Jewish mothers, of the exigencies in the climb toward academic and professional success, of the sacred and profane connections to the Jewish enterprise in the Land of Israel. But what they can tell you is that some character or another in one of his books masturbated into a piece of meat. (Last summer's wildly successful teenage movie hit, "American Pie," borrowed proudly from this episode.)

But without a prostate and evidently comfortable with his body now in *this* form, Roth delights in finally having his audience exactly where he wants them, as if to say, "Now that the sex is toned down, maybe you can really listen to what I have to say." Let's say for a minute that the sequence of *American Pastoral*, *I Married a Communist*, and the *Human Stain* did not comprise a trilogy. Instead, let's imagine that the conversation with his readers which culminates in *The Human Stain* actually began with *Sabbath's Theater*, much acclaimed for its imaginative and dark exploration of a man coming to terms with death. But what do people insist on remembering first? Mickey Sabbath, the perverted old puppeteer, masturbating on his former lover's grave. It is here, I suspect, in the face of death (*Sabbath's Theater*, written in 1995, is dedicated to two recently deceased friends) that Roth sets out to explore his life in a way he

never has before. To move in one's life work from masturbating into a fresh piece of meat in *Portnoy's Complaint* to a graveside release in *Sabbath's Theater* is more than a macabre statement on the state of one's sexuality. Like the kabbalistic mystics who found God in the spiritual annihilation of the self, Roth begins a particular meditation on death, impotence, and the existential self not in the form of a trilogy, but in the perfect, four-based diamond of the "great American novel." He does so in order to lay bare his soul at the twilight of his life and to poke a few more holes in the idea of American sanctimony at the dawn of a new century. Leave it to a Jew to shed a little darkness on the apocalyptic impulse for light in the new millennium. The taste of death can sometimes do that to a man.

The purely comic artist of caricature has exited the stage and in his place is an older man, no longer motivated by the demons of provocation but still amused by the propensity of his readers and critics to see him in that way. It is perfectly appropriate that Sabbath (Roth not going quietly into the dark night of rest) is a puppeteer, manipulating characters from behind the scenes, no longer in need of being front and center, as he was in so many of his past literary excursions.

With *American Pastoral*, then, we barely encounter Roth's literary alter-ego Nathan Zuckerman. Instead, there is Swede Levov, the chief stud in Zuckerman's high school class, the Jew most likely to pass, who, in his encounter with

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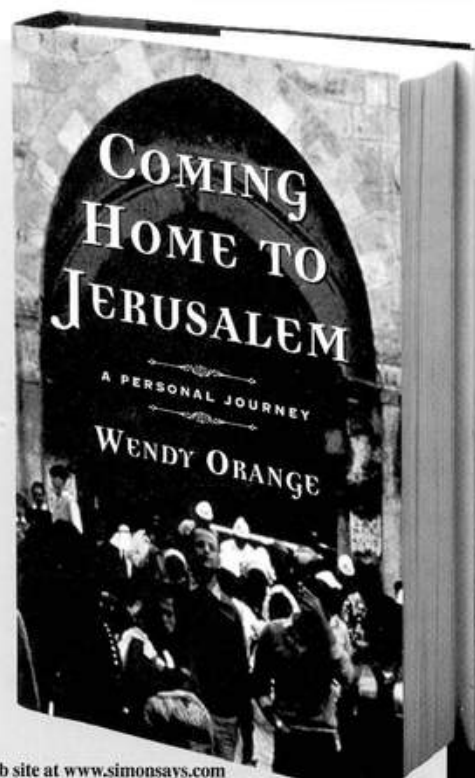
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the confidante Zuckerman, reveals a series of deep, dark secrets about his not-so-perfect life. There is, it seems, as in *Sabbath's Theater*, a reckoning with sexuality. For Sabbath, it was finding the very edge of sexual expression, for meeting his match in his lover Drenka. In *American Pastoral*, Swede Levov is imagined by Zuckerman to have caused his daughter's descent into terrorism and madness by accepting a kiss from her one day on an innocent drive—a kiss that would haunt Levov as either entirely innocent or terribly incestuous. As has always been the case in his astonishing career, Roth is less concerned with politics than he is with people and their motivations for engaging the politics of life and death, love and sex.

And this is precisely why President Clinton appears as one of the "spooks" in the *Human Stain*. The critic Greil Marcus, writing on Clinton, reminds fans of the 1992 Clinton campaign, when the Arkansas governor, behind in the polls, decided to throw discretion to the wind and embrace the perception that he was nothing but poor white trash who had made it to Georgetown, Oxford, and Yale on sheer determination, hard work, connections, and, of course, charm. He did not, asserted finer observers, *belong*. This tension in American life—between those born with privilege and those challenged to break down the barriers of success, is another symbol of the past American century—and is well understood by blacks, Jews and, as Clinton demonstrates, poor whites. We would be missing an exceedingly interesting point about Roth's latest book to ignore the possibility of this idea, this stain of otherness, in the American skin; feigning Jewishness, oddly enough, allowed Silk, in the recreation of his outer self, to maintain a shred of connection to *some kind* of ethnic attachment, to something deeper than plain old *whiteness*.

But even Clinton is a derivation, a variation on a pop culture trope. In the din of America's search for meaning at the end of the millennium, it should not surprise us that Roth has sailed back in time in search of a different kind of savior. From Nathan Zuckerman's solitary perch in a Berkshires cabin to Coleman Silk's reconstructed blackness, with the angry punctuation of Roth's running commentary on the hypocrisy of making sex in the White House a crime, we are left with the biggest surprise of all in any Philip Roth novel—Elvis. Mere mention of the name raises an image, an icon in American cultural discourse that sends the mind reeling. As a recently published series of essays by Marcus ably demonstrates, Elvis Presley conjures for American fans of popular music and culture the conflict between unlimited horizons for possibility and the staunch barriers of good taste. In *Double Trouble: Bill Clinton and Elvis Presley in a Land of No Alternatives*, Marcus writes that around Elvis "is an aura

of irreducible glamour and desire, an American mirror, a mirror that gives back horror and grace, success and failure, pride and shame." And as Marcus shows, Clinton employed the Elvis myth to considerable advantage in his own two successive runs for the White House.

Though never referred to outright, Elvis is another spook floating beneath the surface in *The Human Stain*, precisely because for the first time in decades, Roth has decided not to put male Jewish eros front and center in his critique of contemporary American life. But the image that Roth deploys,

written in post-cancer clarity, is veiled and truncated. Remember: even Ed Sullivan, who created some controversy by suggesting that "Negroes" appear on his musical program and who knew that Elvis represented not only a crossover act but enjoyed great support and popularity in the black community, ordered his cameramen to show Elvis from *the waist up*.

Roth understands that Clinton has articulated something throughout the presidency that has been known since

that fateful night in 1992, when he donned sunglasses and appeared on Arsenio Hall to blow his saxophone, playing Elvis Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel." From that night forth, through the stage lights of MTV and the organ groans of the black church, Clinton embraced his poor-boy roots and wound his fate as a man from Hope, Arkansas with that of a man from Tupelo, Mississippi. Even Nobel laureate Toni Morrison jumped into the fray in 1998, declaring in a *New Yorker* article that one of the subtexts to the viciousness of the impeachment campaign against the president was that, to many, he was America's first black president—a caricature of an over-sexed charmer who loves his women, his church, and his morning jog interrupted with a stop at McDonald's. Of course, beneath Morrison's caricature is great admiration for the president's ability to connect deeply and personally to American blacks in their shared language of the church—a concept Clinton has readily embraced in his recent appearances before the Congressional Black Caucus.

No matter who climbs the podium to take the oath of office in January when Clinton steps down, the country will bid farewell (fond or otherwise) to a president who presided over the last decade of this American century bringing more change in the area of race and ethnic ascendancy than perhaps any other in our nation's history. Like a prophet for contemporary times, Roth is obviously amused by the idea that if it were the Fifties all over again, he'd be forced to break down the barriers of sexual repression with his transgressive and comedic portrayals of angsty Jewish maleness. As it is, wiser and less sexually potent, he employs the spook of Elvis to show America, stains and all, from the waist down. □

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Creating an Accessible Life

Rebecca T. Alpert

■ *Out of the Blue: One Woman's Story of Stroke, Love and Survival* by Bonnie Sherr Klein. Wildcat Canyon Press, 2000.

I met Bonnie Sherr Klein in Montreal in 1985. We were introduced by her rabbi and my colleague, Ron Aigen, who thought we would have a lot in common. Ron was right. At the time, Bonnie had recently finished a widely acclaimed documentary film, *Speaking Our Peace*, about the women's peace movement. I was on the board of Arthur Waskow's Jewish anti-nuclear organization, the Shalom Center. We were both feminist activists as well. I remember the afternoon we spent together distinctly, as much because of Bonnie's passionate engagement in life and convictions about the possibilities for changing the world as for the conversation about the commitments we shared.

Less than two years later, Bonnie's life changed dramatically. At age forty-six, she experienced two strokes. Living through them and learning how to live after them all but replaced documentary filmmaking as her work. Although this experience caused her to change her medium (from filmmaking to radio producing and memoir writing) and her message (from the issues of pornography and peace to

disability rights), her passionate engagement and convictions about the world have not changed at all. Bonnie Klein's beautifully crafted memoir, *Out of the Blue: One Woman's Story of Stroke, Love and Survival* (published several years ago in Canada, where it became a national best seller, as *Slow Dance: A Story of Stroke, Love and Disability*) teaches those of us temporarily able-bodied people not only about Klein's personal experiences, but about the work we need to do in solidarity with the movement for disability rights.

Reading this memoir is part of that work. As a teacher of women's studies, it is imperative for me to make the

lives and issues of women with disabilities accessible to my students. To do that, they must be accessible to me. Including Klein's writing (or other equally wonderful autobiographical works by women like Nancy Mairs) in my courses brings these issues to the forefront of the consciousness of those of us who would most like to forget about them, while letting those with disabilities, both visible and hidden, know that women's studies is also about their lives.

While "consciousness raising" has always been an important feminist principle, disability is an issue that those of us who are not living with it—or living with people who have disabilities—would prefer to ignore. It makes us too vulnerable, too aware that the same thing could easily happen to us at any moment in time. But we must pay



Rebecca T. Alpert is the co-director of the Women's Studies Program at Temple University. She is a rabbi and the editor of *Voices of the Religious Left: A Contemporary Sourcebook* for Temple University Press (2000).

BOOK REVIEW

attention to the questions disability rights activists raise.

First and foremost, we must work for universal access to health care. Klein's story is about a privileged woman whose husband is a medical professional who can (and does) advocate for her in the system. She has a strong network of family, friends, co-workers, and synagogue members who are there for her and has Canadian citizenship that entitles her to health care even if she were unemployed or without financial resources. Klein acknowledges those privileges, and makes us keenly aware of what her life would have been like without them. Her work raises questions not only about a society that lacks universal access to health care, but one which makes the work of caring for others a low priority.

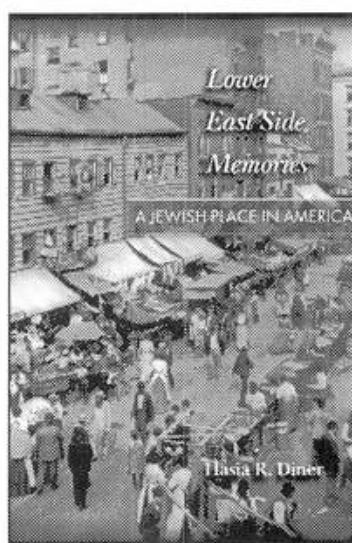
Klein also reminds us what it's like to live in a world where stairs and doorways and bathrooms create barriers that keep people with mobility dis-

abilities out of restaurants, movie theaters, and other public places the rest of us never think about. Reading this memoir has made me look at my everyday world very differently, and think about how much of the life I live is dependent on the access that I take for granted. Although the Americans with Disabilities Act has made an enormous difference, there is still much that is inaccessible, from places that are not covered by the act to those places that have made the minimum accommodation, which is rarely enough. For example, Klein tells the story of a restaurant which considered "access" to be having the waiters carry her up the stairs. It's an issue we need to be much more thoughtful about. If we all started asking questions to restaurant owners like, "How do you expect someone using a cane to open this heavy door," maybe things would change.

Klein's experience with the Jewish community is quite positive. The rabbi

(my friend Ron Aigen) is present to her throughout, as are other synagogue members. A ritual of re-entry into the synagogue really works for her and her family. Her new community in Vancouver is also very embracing (and learned a valuable lesson when they planned Rosh Hashanah services in an inaccessible building one year). The Jewish Healing Movement is responsible for the increased sensitivity and awareness on these issues, and this commitment to caring is a way of repairing the world.

Like every other identity movement, disability rights activists walk a fine line between telling tragic stories (to make sure people understand that there are issues that society needs to address) and looking at the triumphs (to make sure people understand that people with disabilities also live fulfilling, active and meaningful lives). Klein takes you to both places. Like the afternoon I spent with her many years ago, it was well worth the trip. □



Lower East Side Memories

A Jewish Place in America
Hasia R. Diner

Manhattan's Lower East Side stands for Jewish experience in America. Despite the fact that most American Jews have never set foot there, the Lower East Side is firm in their collective memory. To learn when and why this dark warren of pushcart-lined streets became an icon, Hasia Diner follows a wide trail of high and popular culture.

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Chess Midrash

The Art of Samuel Bak

Daniel Schiffrin

■ *The Game Continues: Chess in the Art of Samuel Bak* with introduction by Lawrence L. Langer. Pucker Gallery/Indiana University Press, 1999.

The game of chess—with its richness, complexity and barely suppressed violence—is an extraordinary metaphor for the human condition. Some of the most important fiction writers and poets of the last two centuries—Nabokov, Borges, Tolstoy, Canetti, Aleichem, Eliot, and others—have fully recognized the uncanny ability of a chess game to represent the contradictions, struggles, and hopes of human society. Despite the gigantic shadow cast by IBM's supercrunching Deep Blue computer's win over Garry Kasparov, the game of chess continues to offer lessons about what makes us essentially human.

Samuel Bak, a painter and child survivor of the Holocaust, has done visually what some of the best writers have done verbally—employ chess as a vehicle for exploring the brokenness of our world. More centrally, in his new book of paintings, *The Game Continues: Chess in the Art of Samuel Bak*, Bak lays out a visual midrash on Jewish fears and dreams in the post-Auschwitz age.

Bak's art, which has been shown internationally for many years, is rooted in loss, a certainty that any



In the Mountains of Troy, 1998. Samuel Bak.
Oil on canvas 18" by 22½". Courtesy of Pucker Gallery, Boston

grandeur the world once possessed is long gone. His paintings are both surreal and utterly precise, Kafkaesque in their ability to simultaneously expose the almost criminal essence of much of human society while leaving open the possibility of redemption.

Bak's use of chess to mirror Jewish life in history is neither incidental nor glib—as Nabokov's approach often was—for chess has had a very specific, and symbolic, place in twentieth-century Jewish life. For many middle-class European Jews during the last century or so, chess—along with classical music—represented the core of Western culture and sophistication. The beauty and promise of the game represented Jewish possibilities in a Europe they believed would continue to welcome them with open arms.

On a purely intellectual level, chess was also a kind of substitute for the study of Talmud, since both activities required detailed analysis, an excellent memory, and a keen awareness of the great commentators/players who had come before. Every serious game of

chess was a gloss on another serious game, and the tradition of chess strategies was a Gemara-like web that grew in depth and complexity as new generations of geniuses added their thoughts. In this regard, chess seemed like a continuation of an ancient pastime as well as a leap into the heart of European intellectual life.

The Holocaust, of course, was the checkmate for European Jews. This can be seen in the re-imagining of chess after the fall, from Stefan Zweig's 1942 novella, *The Royal Game*, to Paolo Maurensig's 1993 novel, *The Luneburg Variation*, as well as in *The Game Continues* and Bak's earlier *Chess as Metaphor in the Art of Samuel Bak*. In all of these works, the sense of loss, dislocation, and insanity is palpable. In *The Luneburg Variation* especially—an Italian novel about chess and the Holocaust—the absence of God is woven into the texture of the narration. God is only the best and most cunning chess player, or perhaps God is just the chess move itself.

There are many references in Holocaust literature, both in fiction and non-fiction, to how Jews, starving and filthy in the camps or in hiding, made chess a

Daniel Schiffrin writes about the arts for New York Jewish Week and is also an editor at kasparovchess.com, a website devoted to chess.



Messengers of Lost Prophecies, 1998. Samuel Bak.
Oil on canvas 32¼" by 91¼". Courtesy of Pucker Gallery, Boston

priority. They took great pains to fashion chess pieces out of garbage and bric-a-brac in order to continue playing a game that represented both personal continuity and some ideal of "civilization." Yossi Klein Halevi, in *Memoirs of a Jewish Extremist*, describes how his father survived the war mentally while he lived with two other men in a hole in the ground outside his hometown in Transylvania: "While it was light, they played chess. The pieces were crudely carved bark, marked with distinguishing signs; the board was scratched onto the earth."

The more astute among these survivors probably realized that this former café pastime, played without coffee or cigarettes or brandy, now represented the obverse of civilized leisure—that the shiny pieces moved with such precision, with almost musical rhythm, were merely façades hiding the muck of violence and deceit below. Europe's veneer of cultural refinement was unmasked as a fraud; violence, on and off the board, ruled.

Bak's paintings in *The Game Continues* evoke both the Jewish and universal sense of disappointment and destruction with great restraint, but with enormous power. Bak's smokestacks, mass graves, stone tablets, and allusions to prophecy elicit the promise and failure of Jewish history and theology. But the canvasses are still subtle in

this regard, and their palpable symbolism is also an attempt to put the Holocaust in a larger context of human destruction and wandering. Holocaust scholar Lawrence L. Langer, who wrote a fascinating introductory essay for the book, puts Bak's paintings in the broadest theological, even teleological, perspective:

In these paintings Bak provides us with a visual vocabulary for imagining the tension between fixity and flux that has plagued human effort since the birth of history. He is more concerned with striving than arrival; hence we have no portrayal of the final conquest of checkmate, any more than we have a single likeness of an intact chessboard, with its tidy pieces ready to charge into the fray. Bak's chess figures inhabit a middle realm between creation and decay, reminding us of the ceaseless struggle that informs our ongoing human saga of a journey without apparent resolution.

Like Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus*, Bak's chess paintings force us to look at the individual's frailty, pain, and isolation with fresh eyes by anthropomorphizing the faceless figurines that populate the paintings. Pawns and knights are cracked in half, pierced with arrows, standing alone at the edge of a cliff, or hiding underneath a broken chessboard. The strangeness of this humanization makes it more com-

elling. Theodor Adorno's provocative idea that only a radically different kind of language could deeply engage people in the modern age seems relevant in the novelty of Bak's approach. Langer's comparison of Bak paintings with T. S. Eliot's anti-epic poem, "The Wasteland," is a strange but productive insight, since both bodies of work have attempted to refashion artistic language by focusing on the "end of civilization," and subsequent strategies of spiritual survival. As Bak tells Langer in an earlier book, *Landscapes of Jewish Experience*, his paintings convey "a sense of a world that was shattered, of a world that was broken, of a world that exists again through an enormous effort to put everything together, when it is absolutely impossible to put it together because the broken things can never become whole again. But we still can make something that looks as if it was whole and live with it."

Two of the most impressive paintings in *The Game Continues* are "In the Mountains of Troy" and "Messengers of Lost Prophecies." "In the Mountains of Troy" features a huge stately horse standing boldly against a pleasant, cloudy sky. Built of a granite-like stone, like many of Bak's figures, the horse appears to be expelling pawns from its midsection. Understood in the context of the Holocaust, this Trojan Horse suggests the trickery of the Germans

(and other Europeans) who fooled the Jews into believing their "gift" of citizenship and acceptance was genuine. The allusion to ancient Greece, the fountain of Western civilization, suggests that the deceit has been operative since time immemorial.

In "Messengers of Lost Prophecies," a triptych that evokes and overturns the devotional manner of Christian medieval and Renaissance paintings, Bak presents three images: a messenger-pawn attempting to deliver an important missive; an altar, with a broken chessboard floor, where petitioner-pawns line up for help; and a strangely constructed pawn, with metal wings and a broken midsection, supported by a series of pulleys. Irony and despair alternate here; since the messenger can't speak, the petitioners are begging to another chess figure, and the jerry-rigged pawn, waiting to leap into the future, is immobilized. Kafka comes to mind again with this painting, as humor, futility, and promise collide.

As Langer keenly observes, the use of pawns here—as in the entire series—is richly telling. The pawn "is a victim, subject to the manipulation and abuse of others": the Jew in history. Yet the pawn is the only figure that, upon reaching the other end of the chessboard, can become a queen, the most powerful figure on the board. The game of chess promises the possibility of transformation for those beggars of the chessboard, and in the game itself those dreams sometimes come true. But off the board, as Bak's paintings demonstrate, the pawn's hopes are squashed by the world. Sholom Aleichem's short story, "From Passover to Succos, or The Chess Player's Story," makes the same point. It is about a poor Jewish watchmaker named Rubinstein who, like his father and grandfather before him, was Russia's best chess player. When the governor of the province hears about his prowess, he comes to visit Rubenstein, who believes he will be

showered with gold and given a position of importance at the royal court. Of course, when he finally meets the Czar, he doesn't know what to say and is sent home penniless. He doesn't even get to play.

Today, as Bak indicates with his title, *The Game Continues*. For just as the world has learned well the story of Jewish persecution, people have chosen to ignore its application to other peoples or, even worse, used it as a blueprint to kill and control while the world silently watches.

There is yet another side to the continuation of this game. Today most of the world's Jews, even in Israel, live in almost messianic physical safety, compared to most of Jewish history. But the attempt to create a just world, to truly learn the lessons of the Holocaust, continues. Where would the world be if one could reach the other side and become a queen—a Shechinah, the feminine presence of God—without having to defeat the other to get there? □

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Short Takes

A Look at What's in Other Magazines and on the Web

Here TIKKUN continues our conversation with American intellectual, political, and cultural media.

Harvard International Review

The Summer 2000 issue of *Harvard International Review* offers an exhaustive and long overdue critique of the so-called "Rogue State" philosophy currently guiding much of U.S. foreign and military policy. Rogue states are "bogey man" countries—notably Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea—that have been identified as nations which, for one reason or another, do not behave in the manner meeting the expectations of the international community. The five articles in this issue elucidate the inconsistencies, the downright bogus military/industrial complex propaganda, and, most damningly, the human rights abuses inherent in much of the Rogue State theory.

Michael Klare, professor at Hampshire College, offers a useful history of what he calls the "Rogue Doctrine," pointing out the role of Colin Powell, every Republican's choice for the most humane of all generals, as architect of the policy that has done much to prop up the U.S. military budget since the end of the Gulf War. Much of the fear factor posed by bad guys like Saddam stems from their supposed ability to muster so-called Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Yet Klare and Richard Falkenrath (in his piece "Weapons of Mass Reaction") question not only

whether official rogues like Iran actually possess the material and willpower to use these deadly buzzword/buzzbombs, but also point out that many other nations with similar capabilities (Pakistan, for example) have somehow escaped pariah status. The *Harvard Review* supplies a handy chart detailing each rogue nation and its alleged WMD and missile programs. Added to this is a convincing survey by Meghan O'Sullivan of the Brookings Institute questioning the Clinton administration's reflexive sanctions against the various rogue nations. Noam Chomsky also weighs in, opining that the United States is "the true rogue nation," forever invoking its own WMD and above-the-law attitude.

Also in the *Harvard International Review* is a short piece by Stephanie Stallings on the Indian religious leader Sai Baba, perhaps the most widely followed spiritual leader in the world. In addition to a few high-profile celebrity followers like Sarah Ferguson (the Duchess of York) and Isaac Tigrett, founder of the Hard Rock Café, Sai Baba has more than 60 million devotees worldwide. His followers embrace the values of "Love, Peace, Truth, Nonviolence, and Right Conduct." Sai Baba "encourages daily prayer, meditation, benevolent action, individual duty, and positive relations with family and community," as well as public service. In India, with the help of generous donors, Sai Baba has funded the construction of a pipeline that brought water to 750 villages and founded a state-of-the-art hospital that specializes in heart surgery.

Stallings speculates that Sai Baba's traditional message is easing the transition for Indians facing a rapidly changing social structure. Perhaps the same is true for his followers in the rest of the world.

Mother Jones

Mother Jones's October issue also focuses on a post-Cold War threat: namely the fear of international terrorism and its possible washing up on American shores. Robert Dreyfuss' clinically written yet highly informative piece tells us that government spending on various counterterrorism programs has doubled since 1996, currently topping \$11 billion a year. Dreyfuss wonders whether such expenditures are merited or rather if "the effort is wasting enormous sums of federal dollars—without any serious evidence that such programs are actually needed." According to the U.S. Government Accounting Office, Dreyfuss says, such anti-terrorism measures, which have included mass wargame-like mock rehearsals of toxic chemical attacks in places like Portsmouth, New Hampshire, "have been based on worst-case scenarios which are out of balance with the threat." While not discounting horrific events such as the World Trade Center bombing and the madness of Oklahoma City, Dreyfuss indicates that the terrorist menace, real or imagined, has been a financial windfall for various government law enforcement agencies, especially the FBI and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The FBI antiterrorism budget has gone from

\$78 million to \$609 million since Clinton took office. The department of Health and Human Services spent millions stockpiling anti-chemical warfare vaccinations, which were later found not to correspond to the toxic weaponry supposedly in the hands of leading terror groups. Dreyfuss concludes that the inflated terrorism scenario also poses a potential threat to individual liberties in the United States, due to over-zealous surveillance.

American Prospect

Can globalization be democratized? Can democracy be globalized? A piece by Benjamin Barber, author of *Jihad vs. McWorld* among other books, cuts through the diffuse hand-wringing over globalization with a sharp analysis of what he calls the "perilous asymmetry" between the powerful multinational corporations and the democratic nations from which they operate. Our situation is the result of "the rapid globalization of markets in the absence of any commensurable globalization of political and civic institutions...." Multinationals have been operating in the global marketplace for decades, but nations lack similar experience. If anything, recent trends in policy and legislation have placed corporate interests over those of the public. Barber cites the "new and powerful logic" of the information economy that has allowed near-monopolistic media mergers, as well as the international trend toward privatization, "the nasty twin of globalization." Bipartisan acceptance of this "shifting of concentrated power at the highest levels from public to private hands" has weakened the will and ability of nation-states to exert democratic control over markets both internally and internationally. But there's hope, he says. While the street demonstrations are perhaps the most visible signs of dissent, "there is another internationalism, a forming crystal around which a global polity can grow." Building on the successes of

international nongovernmental organizations, a "fledgling transnational civil society" is emerging, uniting NGOs, foundations, intellectuals, activists, and artists. At the same time governments around the world are beginning to seek ways to exert "the civilizing embrace" on this wild capitalism. "After all," Barber writes, "the IMF and the WTO are not supranational organizations, but the tools of groups of powerful nations. They will bend to the will of democratic governments, if leading governments can once again represent the public interests of their sovereign peoples and can find ways to cooperate."

WEB WATCH

Znet

www.lbbs.org/ZNET

E dgy, progressive Z magazine has built its website into a powerful tool for activism. Graphically, it's the online equivalent of a tabloid newspaper, but that just makes it easier and faster to navigate. One click connects you to a trove of quality information and opinion on current crises (including what's happening in Chiapas, Iraq, and Puerto Rico) or to "watch areas" (like anarchy, media, biotech, gender, Japan, and labor). The "Learn" section is a great educational resource that features tutorials, links, transcribed lectures, and bibliographies on topics like the political economy and multiculturalism. The activism section offers a calendar of events and meetings, online contacts, and concrete suggestion for effective actions. Recent and not-so-recent essays and articles from print media are posted, and there's a lively fiction site as well. New webusers will appreciate the web tutorials, and the no-frames option will please those with older computers. The progressive quotes sprinkled throughout the site are just an added treat, like this one from Joseph Heller: "They will do whatever we let them get away with."

Jew Watch

www.jewwatch.com

It would not be a waste of time to visit this stomach-turning site for a glimpse into the distorted cyberworld of the American anti-Semite. It's a massive endeavor that describes itself as "A not-for-profit library for private study, scholarship, or research." Headings include "Jewish Hate Groups," i.e. the Anti-Defamation League, B'nai Brith, and the ACLU; "Jewish Hate Crimes Against Other Jewish Sects"; "Jewish Religions," such as Christianity and Magic/Wiccan Cults; and perhaps the strangest of all, "Jewish Mind Control Mechanisms," which includes "Civil Rights, Liberalism, Atheism, and Homosexuality." Beware: this site sometimes comes up unexpectedly when web users include the word "jew" in a search.

Beliefnet

www.beliefnet.org

Beliefnet, which bills itself as a "source for spirituality, religion, and morality," offers a fabulously variegated, rich, and intelligently eclectic compendium of soulful concerns. A couple of clicks brings the surfer to a superfast word concordance linked to various sacred texts of Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, and Judaism and to six different versions of the Bible, each of which is available in its entirety. This site is a one-stop spiritual center: here you can find not only parental advice on raising a moral child, the works of columnists as diverse as Reaganist Elliot Abrams and paganist Margot Adler, and links to hundreds of various houses of worship (including twelve step programs and Michael Lerner's Beyt Tikkun synagogue in San Francisco), but you can also book package tours to far-flung spiritual centers such as Tibet and Stonehenge. The whole thing has a kind of postmodernist ad veneer (the slogan is "everyone believes in something"). But that is more than made up for by the diverse and voluminous information within. □

The Life of Bobby Kennedy

Jack Newfield

■ *Robert Kennedy: His Life*, by Evan Thomas. Simon and Schuster, 2000.

Robert Kennedy: *His Life* by Evan Thomas advances our understanding of one of the most complex, intense, and changeable political leaders in modern history. This measured, subtle biography contains new research and reporting on someone I thought I knew well after writing my own 1969 memoir and making a 1998 television documentary about him.

Thomas, the author of three earlier books and the assistant managing editor of *Newsweek*, gained access not only to archives, oral histories, and White House tapes, but to RFK's own journals and to insiders who were hoarding some secrets. Through Freedom of Information applications, Thomas got to read the FBI files on Martin Luther King Jr., Sam Giancana, John F. Kennedy, Johnny Rosselli, Frank Sinatra, Marilyn Monroe, and Peter Lawford as well as Stanley Levison, the King adviser who was falsely accused of being a Soviet spy and was used by J. Edgar Hoover as the excuse to bug, wiretap, and use illegal electronic surveillance against Dr. King.

Thomas also got interviews with Hoover's deputy, Cartha DeLoach; Richard Bissell—the CIA's dark creature who launched the alliance with

the Mafia to kill Castro; CIA director Richard Helms; right-wing Cuban exile leaders; and the son and widow of Walter Sheridan, the discreet investigator who took many of RFK's secrets to the grave in 1996. He also interviewed several of RFK's earliest girlfriends, who provide a sweet picture of a prudish, withdrawn, almost friendless teenage Kennedy, who didn't smoke or drink till he was twenty-one.

This book applies the author's insider access and fair-minded scholarship to the great mysteries of Kennedy's life—the CIA plots to kill Castro, his rumored relationship with Marilyn Monroe, the wiretapping of Martin Luther King Jr., President Kennedy's sexual adventurism, the vote-stealing in Chicago for JFK in 1960, and the black-mailing of JFK by Hoover.

Thomas also proves to be a psychologically astute biographer, drawing insights from Harvard psychologist Robert Coles, who was very close to

Robert Kennedy—almost his informal shrink. For example this passage:

Kennedy revealed glimpses of his own childhood to Coles. He described how his father had taught him to be tough. Coles sensed his fear of timidity and weakness.

Coles was fascinated by Kennedy's child-like qualities, the way he loved ice cream, and squirmed on a dais. He realized that in an odd way, Kennedy had been saved by neglect. To be overlooked was a privilege in the Kennedy family. Bobby was the only one who was truly in touch with his emotions, who was able to feel. The others were cut off from theirs, made to be adults, required to be stoic.

Thomas does not try to artificially resolve the paradoxes and contradictions in Kennedy's character; he lets them co-exist and speak for themselves. Kennedy was a fatalist who also frequently said, "One person can make a difference.... You must try to bend



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE JFK LIBRARY

Jack Newfield is a columnist for the *New York Post* and the author of *Robert Kennedy: A Memoir*.

history to your will." He was a shy, private man, born for the shadows, who willed himself into a public figure and candidate after his brother's death. Courage was the most important human quality to Robert Kennedy, "the trait that makes everything else possible." Yet he wavered for six months before he risked everything to run against LBJ in 1968. RFK was a vote-counting pragmatist who, unlike most other liberals, knew how to apply power and pressure. But he was also a visionary dreamer who asked his followers to seek a newer world, saying, "Some men see things as they are, and say 'Why?' I dream of things that never were and say, 'Why not?'"

On the broad arc of Kennedy's life, Thomas agrees with my own thesis of change. He started out in the 1950s as a sullen, intolerant conservative, working for seven months for Joe McCarthy, influenced by his anti-Semitic father, Ambassador Joseph Kennedy, a man he privately compared to Shakespeare's Henry IV. His liberal education began when, as attorney general, RFK had to deal with the civil rights movement. In 1962 he was still appointing segregationists to the federal bench. Gradually he got to know people like John Lewis and Harry Belafonte, and they helped open his eyes to the realities of life for black Americans. By 1963, moved by the courage of the children going to jail with King in Birmingham and the assassination of Medgar Evers by a Klan sniper in June of that year, he was starting to get it.

But it was another assassination that truly transformed him. Until JFK's death, RFK had really just been an enforcer of his brother's agenda. But at thirty-eight, in the deepest grief imaginable, he began to read Camus and the Greek poets and to try to define, for the first time in his life, what his own values were.

My own view, which Thomas seems close to sharing, is that Kennedy came to feel a crushing guilt for the death of the brother he idolized. On the day his brother was shot, RFK made a series

of phone calls to try to determine whether Cuban exiles, the CIA, or the Mafia were behind the assassination. By 1967 he came to settle on organized crime, saying so to Richard Goodwin and Arthur Schlesinger. Interestingly, he never read the *Warren Report*. Kennedy most likely felt that the assassination was in retaliation for his own relentless pressure to convict Sam Giancana, Santo Trafficante, Carlos Marcello, and Jimmy Hoffa. He hated the Mafia, especially Sam Giancana. In 1959, RFK questioned Giancana under oath when he was counsel to the McClellan committee. The film still exists and on those old frames RFK can be seen recklessly baiting the serial killer, Giancana, with sarcasm. After the boss of the Chicago outfit giggles a few times while taking the Fifth Amendment, Kennedy says, "I thought only little girls giggled."

From 1965 through 1968, Kennedy's learning curve spiked upward as he crusaded against poverty and racism, got to know Cesar Chavez and Marian Wright, and gradually came to oppose the Vietnam war, a war that he knew his brother had played a role in expanding. Despite growing up with his father's anti-Semitic dinner table remarks, RFK's senate staff was dominated by Jews—Peter Edelman, Adam Walinsky, Frank Mankiewicz. They helped make him more progressive. During his years in the Senate, Kennedy changed and grew more than any other politician I ever saw. And this was genuine interior change, not the counterfeit variety scripted by pollsters and media gurus.

This book also shines the flashlight of history under the rock where J. Edgar Hoover slithered. Hoover emerges as a monster of lawless racism and trickery. The chapters on Martin Luther King Jr., the Castro plots, and JFK's multiple mistresses show Hoover practicing illegal methods to collect filth and then using it against the Kennedys in order to keep his job. Each time he found JFK with a mistress, he sent RFK a memo about it.

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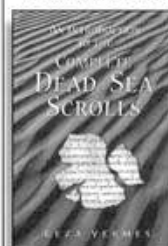
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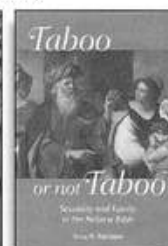
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BOOK REVIEW

Thomas refers to Hoover's "black-mail game" against the Kennedys, saying it was more "implied" than direct—but effective. Fear of Hoover's blackmail capacities may have been behind RFK's indecision over whether to challenge LBJ in 1968. In fact, three weeks before RFK's assassination, Hoover and/or LBJ leaked the news that RFK had signed a wiretap authorization on Martin Luther King Jr.'s home on October 7, 1963. Though the leak was intended to hurt Kennedy with the black vote in California, he got 85 percent of it anyway. Thomas is appropriately tough on RFK for this indefensible act, as he is for other mistakes and deceptions.

Here are Thomas's conclusions to some of the historical controversies that have blurred RFK in a shroud of myth:

On the rumored affair with Marilyn Monroe, Thomas says the evidence strongly points to it never happening. He writes:

All that is certain and provable is that RFK knew Monroe and saw her on four occasions, probably never alone.... Kennedy appears to have fluttered briefly around Monroe, but without flying too close....

Sometime on Saturday night, August 4, [1962] Monroe overdosed on barbiturates. The conspiracy theorists place RFK lurking in the shadow nearby. Actually he was about 350 miles away, with Ethel, at a ranch owned by some friends outside San Francisco, an hour from the nearest airport, or five hours by car. His hosts have attested to his presence throughout the weekend.

Most of the Kennedy-Monroe rumors seem to trace back to his brother-in-law Peter Lawford. But Thomas writes:

Lawford's testimony can be discounted. Plagued by problems with drugs and alcohol, he went through a hostile separation from Pat Lawford in 1963, rejected and scorned by the Kennedy family, particularly RFK....

If Kennedy had taken up with Monroe, it seems likely that J.

Edgar Hoover would have learned of the relationship and filed the information away for later use. But only one mention of RFK and Marilyn Monroe has emerged from Hoover's files and the source was RFK himself.

On the question of whether RFK knew about the CIA-Mafia alliance to assassinate Castro, Thomas's conclusion is that, "The truth is unknowable, lost in a maze of dissembling." RFK was clearly obsessed with Castro and wanted to "get rid of him," but no living witness or memo exists that links RFK to the liquidation strategy of using mob assassins. Although Thomas does raise the question of protective "plausible deniability"—in other words, how much RFK wanted to know—he makes it clear that these immoral and dopey schemes were concocted by the CIA's chief of covert actions, Richard Bissell, in August of 1960, while Richard Nixon was vice-president. (During the Eisenhower presidency when Allen Dulles ran the CIA, Bissell, a patrician from Yale, had come up with the notion of poisoning Patrice Lumumba in the Congo.)

The official authorization for the CIA-Mafia plots came from Richard Helms and William Harvey. Bissell, Helms, and Harvey (who hated RFK) all say they never discussed these assassination plots with Robert Kennedy. When Kennedy found out about them in May of 1962 he was furious. He screamed at the CIA leader for not telling him of the plots, and for using the same gangsters he was trying to prosecute. My own sources have long maintained that the "mob scammed the Agency, taking the CIA's money but never really trying to kill Castro. They thought that by pretending to work for the CIA, they would get some immunity from the rest of the federal government."

On the wiretapping of King, and the years of surveillance on Stanley Levison, Thomas comes down, correctly, on the anti-Kennedy side. There

was never any proof that Levison was a Soviet spy or agent. He broke with the American Communist Party in 1955. The FBI even tried to recruit him as a double agent. Based on what Hoover was telling them, both Kennedy brothers urged King to end all contact with Levison, but they never asked for any proof. Hoover bluffed the Kennedys with hokum and for whatever reason they fell for it. After Levison's death, RFK's most liberal aide in the Justice Department, John Siegenthaler, apologized to Levison's son for what had been done to his father, and to Dr. King, by the Kennedy Justice Department.

Let me close with a personal story about Robert Kennedy. Two nights before his funeral, I was let into the empty St. Patrick's Cathedral and invited to stand vigil over his flag-draped casket. Tom Hayden was with me and I could hear him sobbing quietly in a pew while tears ran down my own cheeks. A little while later that same night, Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago took his turn standing vigil. George McGovern was waiting his turn and he later told me how moved he was by seeing the tough political boss of Chicago sobbing uncontrollably, "the cords of his neck bulging out."

Ten weeks later, Tom Hayden and Richard Daley would lead opposing armies of the night—police and protesters—in a violent battle in the streets of Chicago. That brutal chaos helped make Richard Nixon president. Only Robert Kennedy would have united Tom Hayden and Richard Daley in tears in that church on that night. Those two polar opposites each saw something in RFK that touched their core.

While I was getting tear-gassed in Chicago that summer, I kept thinking about what might have been. And I recalled the quotation from Pascal that Camus invokes at the beginning of *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*: "A man does not show his greatness by being at one extremity, but rather by touching both at once." □

Politics as News

David M. Stone

■ *Everything You Think You Know About Politics ... And Why You're Wrong*, by Kathleen Hall Jamieson. Basic Books, 2000.

By the time you read this, we may know whether the presidential campaign between Al Gore and George W. Bush turned out to be a national referendum on important policy issues or really just a "popularity contest" between men with very different personalities and leadership styles. But whatever the outcome, history will show that the final lap in the 2000 race for the White House began on Labor Day with two media-related flapdoodles: the Republican candidate's inadvertently public description of a *New York Times* reporter as a "major league asshole" and the now-typical charges and counter-charges over which campaign was being more "negative" with its TV commercials.

Analyzing both the perception and the reality about campaign media coverage and such claims of "negative campaigning" is at the core of *Everything You Think You Know About Politics ... And Why You're Wrong*. University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications Dean and political pundit Kathleen Hall Jamieson's name is on the cover. She herself has become one of the most visible and trusted political analysts as a regular on PBS's *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* and ABC's *Nightline*. But as she

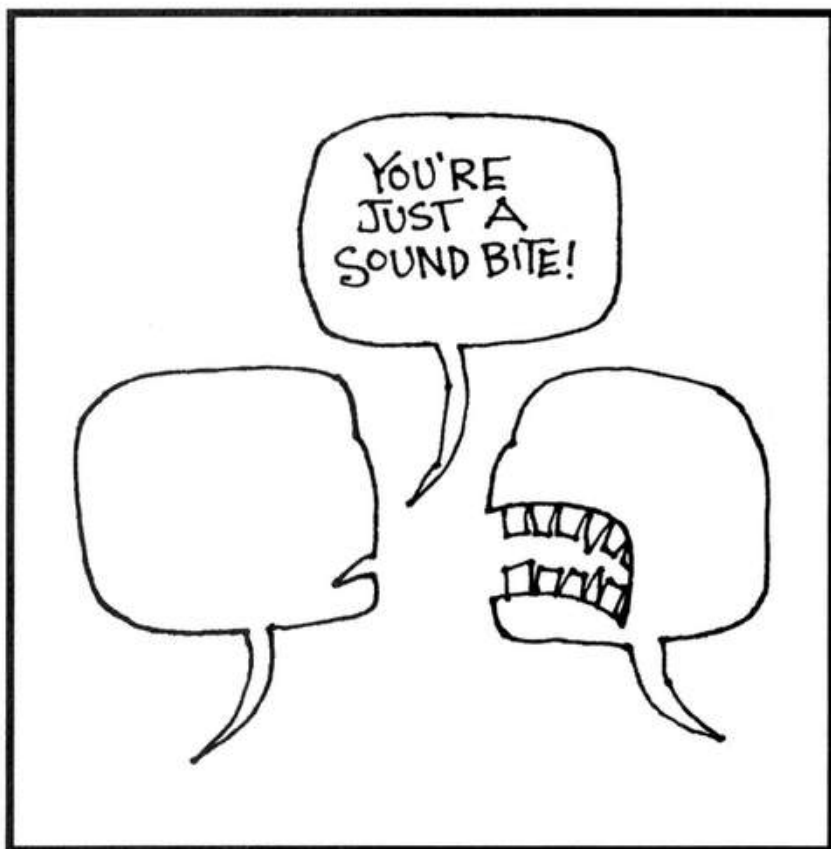
gracefully makes clear at the very outset, this challenge to a number of popular assumptions about the symbiotic relationship between politics and the media is a truly collaborative enterprise. Indeed, the collectively bylined chapters specify who among students and faculty involved in Annenberg's Campaign Mapping Project and other research on political communication were contributors. And it's clear that their efforts were not inconsiderable, nor were Jamieson's in directing and framing such a wide-ranging inquiry into the modern political spin cycle.

But such creativity by committee yields predictably uneven results stylistically. The book is structured as a series of tightly focused answers to an opening "quiz" of twenty intentionally loaded true-false questions. Examples include "Most candidate ads lie most of the time" and "The quality of presidential general-election campaigns has steadily worsened over the years." True or false to these and eighteen other such claims? Jamieson acknowledges that the approach is "as simplis-

tic as some of the assumptions I am challenging. You might say that I am using conflict, simplified narratives, and manipulative devices just as news and ads do—to entice you into watching and reading."

Make no mistake about it, despite such enticement and its provocative title, *Everything You Think You Know About Politics ...* reads like the foundation-funded academic research report that it is. Some chapters go on for pages about the ancient roots of political rhetoric while others literally contain only a paragraph or two—and perhaps a chart of research results on such contemporary questions as whether turnout in 1996 was actually the lowest since 1924. But without more of a narrative or thematic consistency, I wonder whether the work will appeal to an audience beyond the "insiders" who are already somehow involved professionally in the political process. Perhaps it doesn't have to.

Certainly, there is good news here for political staffers and consultants who are forever defending the use and effectiveness of so-called negative advertising. Jamieson and her team take the press and pundit class to task



Now an independent television producer in New York, David M. Stone served as communications director to U.S. Senator Harris Wofford between 1991 and 1995.

(herself included) for their simplistic use of the term and their assumptions about its impact on voter behavior. She points out that there's a real difference between political ads that attack the character of an opponent and those that sharply compare the positions of the candidates. In perhaps the most refreshing insight in the book, she finds that the conventional wis-

dom holding that negative ads depress voter turnout and lead to increased public alienation from the political process is either untrue or, at the very least, far too simplistic.

"Attack" ads actually include more substantive information about candidates' policy positions than softer "advocacy" ads.

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television and paid commercials are the dominant feature of modern politics, affecting not only the tone and substance of debate, but perverting the entire governing process by the constant, crushing burden on elected officials to raise money for television air time. The legalized corruption of the "soft-money" system, which has allowed Republicans and Democrats

dom holding that negative ads depress voter turnout and lead to increased public alienation from the political process is either untrue or, at the very least, far too simplistic.

The reality is that presidential campaigns attract far more free media attention than races for any other local, state, or federal office. Indeed, despite a dwindling audience for regular political news, presidential primaries continue to draw saturation coverage ranging from the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* analyses to David Letterman and Jay Leno monologues months before any votes will be cast. The problem of "civic engagement" in the form of low voter awareness and a scarcity of independent reporting on issues seems to be far more significant in races for Congress, state legislatures, and other local offices whose holders may have an even more direct impact on a voter's community. The book does include a single chapter each on a recent California governor's race and on a Philadelphia mayoral primary, but its overwhelming focus remains on presidential campaign media.

Working in Pennsylvania politics, I experienced this challenge first-hand. Typical is a conversation I had with a Philadelphia newspaper reporter as my boss, Senator Harris Wofford, headed into his re-election after serving less than half a typical Senate term he had

won in a special election after the untimely death of moderate Republican John Heinz. "We have a poll that says Pennsylvanians don't know what your guy has done," the reporter said. "What's your comment?"

"Your newspaper doesn't report on the things he's done," I replied, alluding to a litany of his efforts and actions. "How are people supposed to know about it if you don't report on it," I asked?

"That's not our problem," she snapped, "are you going to give me a comment on this poll or not?"

There it was in a nutshell; the legislative process is only rarely "news" and to the extent state and local races do get coverage, it is, like the presidential campaign, often focused on polls and political strategy. In many such races where press coverage is scant, campaign-sponsored television and radio ads—and everything from traditional leaflets and yard signs to digital-age websites and email—provide virtually the *only* information source for most voters who never make it to the back of the local news section. By comparison, paid ads do not fill an information vacuum in national campaigns. Citizens who turn on their TVs can hardly avoid *some* free media about presidential races, whose ebb and flow seem dominated by the free media's "press curve." Jamieson herself makes the case that the first presidential "primary" is largely a race to be taken seriously by political reporters and pundits before the first straw poll is ever taken. And other than the Republican's infamous Willie Horton ad attacking Mike Dukakis in 1988, it's difficult to even recall a single presidential campaign ad in the past twenty years, much less one that seems to have had a major impact on shaping the race.

Perhaps a more vexing problem is the limited content that Jamieson and her team have chosen to collect, categorize, and analyze: words. Only words. Of course, words are important, particularly in political discourse. But the

Annenberg school was itself a pioneer in understanding that the substance and impact of mass communication—especially television—derives from a variety of visual and verbal cues. It is a medium driven by image, emotion, and personality—not simply by the spoken words and rational arguments.

At a time when ideology matters less and less to the increasing number of critical swing voters who are simply looking for politicians they feel they can trust, subtleties that convey character may matter a lot more than the details of a candidate's Medicare prescription drug plan. As a front page *New York Times* analysis put it in late August, "For some people, the shifts have sprung from large single events—a convention speech, a tax proposal, a choice of running mate. But for many others, their change in thinking emerged from the smallest but most resonant of details, like a well-placed bottle of wine in a televised home video of Mr. Gore with his family that made Josh Kamody suddenly decide that Mr. Gore was 'fun, someone I felt I would like as my dad.'"

Or consider the moderate Republican woman—and two-time Clinton voter—who told NPR in September that she was anxious to see and evaluate the two candidates in a debate because "I need to see their reactions; I need to see their expressions, I need to see whether they're really being honest. I think your expressions tell a lot." Indeed they do. I do not know how such perfectly human, non-substantive factors might be analyzed under the rigorous protocol Jamieson and her team have so thoroughly followed. But the importance of such factors should be more clearly acknowledged as a key force in our seemingly post-partisan, anti-political era.

Also absent from the book is any mention of the fundamental change in the communications landscape brought on by the World Wide Web and other digital delivery systems. It's true that, moving at Internet-time, the 1996 Clinton-Dole race which is a key focus

of the book included only the first tentative steps introducing the interactive media into politics. But by 2000, online content providers seemed to have a larger presence at the national conventions than ABC, NBC, and CBS, and campaign websites had blossomed into major endeavors. This profusion of information sources has fractionalized audiences across the media landscape. Political news has increasingly become one more "niche market" for a passionately interested segment of the population. And technology is not the only reason.

After nearly a decade of sustained economic growth, with no cold-war threat to national security, no deeply polarizing national issue such as Vietnam, civil rights, or Watergate, a diminished interest in national politics seems wholly understandable. We still have serious problems that need to be addressed as a society, from public education and poverty to health care and social security, to local environmental degradation and global warming. But these defy easily packaged solutions. (Polarizing issues like abortion stand out, despite the deep ambivalence of most voters on the matter, because there are vocal, passionate advocates on each side and because the media can characterize candidates as either "pro-choice" or "pro-life," much as one could use the labels "hawk" or "dove" in the 1960s.) As a result, the "character" of candidates—the subtle human factors that are difficult for researchers to categorize or explain—has become an increasingly central factor in voter behavior.

Jamieson and her team also shine their research spotlight on two media issues that bear on neither presidential politics nor elections. One is the role of local television news on public perceptions of race and crime, and the other is the impact of the tobacco industry's massive paid advertising campaign in 1998 aimed at defeating federal legislation dealing with liability for health problems caused by smoking. Both are important issues. But in

neither case are the research results entirely surprising or clearly related to the rest of the book. As for the former, local news reports in Philadelphia tended to affect racial attitudes of viewers by more often presenting people of color as responsible for crime when they are in fact most often victimized by it.

As for the latter, the research confirms that a well-financed industry advertising barrage can affect citizen perception of a major legislative issue. Although the "Harry and Louise" ads run by the health insurance industry were actually less effective in changing voter attitudes than is generally believed, the \$40 million worth of tobacco industry ads created by Democratic consultant Carter Eskew had an enormous impact—helping increase by 10 percent or more the perception that the tobacco bill was a major tax increase on the working class and would create massive new government bureaucracy.

Jamieson is onto something important in this examination of the booming role of advocacy advertising not only in campaigns, but in legislative battles as well. Closely allied with direct lobbying efforts, such industry "image and advocacy" campaigns are one more important cog in the big-money wheel of media and politics. It's unfortunate that the rigid question-and-answer structure of the book precludes a comprehensive synthesis of these related matters.

Like a third party candidate, *Everything You Thought You Knew About Politics* ... may not win much of a popular vote. But in raising some insightful challenges to the conventional wisdom of today's predictable political debate, it serves a useful public service. If Jamieson and her team are successful only in helping convince her fellow pundits to puncture the superficial debate over so-called "negative" ads, that will be service enough. Alas, campaign 2000 has offered little hope that her own campaign message is being heard. □

What's in a Name?

Alicia Ostriker

■ *The Name*, by Michal Govrin, translated from the Hebrew by Barbara Harshav. Riverhead Books, 1999.

What does it mean to repent? According to R. Joseph Holoveitchik's *Halachic Man*, repentance is "the severing of one's psychic identity with one's previous 'I,' and the creation of a new 'I,' possessor of a new consciousness, a new heart and spirit, different desires, longings, goals.... The desire to be another person, to be different than I am now, is the central motif of repentance." But does repentance abet healing, either of a self or a society?

A woman's passionate attempt to become a new person is a central motif in Michal Govrin's disturbing novel, *The Name*, recently translated from the Hebrew in which it won Israel's coveted Prime Minister's Prize for Writers in 1998. The novel's Hebrew title, *HaShem*, highlights the author's daring, for the title is simultaneously the name of a God who must not be named, and points to the multiple self-naming of its protagonist. Govrin, a poet and experimental theater director as well as novelist, is unique as a writer who fuses profane and religious sensibilities in her work. As a secular writer she is post-Freudian, post-Derridean, yet she grapples with wrenching questions of faith. Steeped in the dizzying discourses of Talmud and Kabbalah,



The sheer verbal beauty of Jewish liturgy, prophecy, and philosophy, the richness of symbolism ... and the depth of custom and legend shaping her life and this story, are irresistibly awesome.

she both reveres and challenges these traditions. The problem in her novel is that Amalia, her heroine, is trying to repent of something she is not guilty of—the Holocaust. And the impossibility of the task may lead her to suicide.

Daughter of a Holocaust survivor, Amalia is named after her father's first wife, a gifted pianist who killed herself in Auschwitz as she was about to be executed, and is hence a heroine to a

whole community. As a small child growing up in America, Amalia is screamed at by her father when she tries to play a xylophone—"Ugly!" he calls her sounds. Inheriting his woundedness and obsession, haunted by the first Amalia, guilt-ridden over her wish to escape into the bohemian life of an avant-garde photographer, she breaks into multiple personalities, multiple names: Mala, Emily, Amy, Malinka. In the diary that is the text of the novel, she calls herself I, you, or she depending on the degree of her self-alienation.

When we first meet her, Amalia is a "penitent," weaving a Torah curtain in

ILLUSTRATION BY JON KRAUSE

Alicia Ostriker's most recent volume of poetry, *The Little Space: Poems Selected and New*, was nominated for a National Book Award. She is also the author of *The Nakedness of the Fathers*.

a small apartment in the Arab section of Jerusalem. It is the time of the counting of the Omer, the fifty days between Passover and Shavuot when, through a regime of purifying prayer, Orthodox Jews hope to help bring about *tikkun olam*, the repair of the world. Amalia is praying intensely, chanting prayers ordinarily said by men, and we soon realize that she expects to offer herself as a sacrifice, a scapegoat, a bride of God, wrapped in the finished Torah scroll, at the close of the Omer.

I am a different person and not the same one who sinned and I change my name. These words of Maimonides become a refrain in the novel, where Amalia's anguished efforts to repudiate her secular life under the auspices of a series of rabbi-mentors continually fail. Neither can she repudiate her doubt of God's justice. None of the simple pieties of those who surround her are effective in healing her soul. Her attempt to exorcise the original Amalia by photographing the places she lived and performed is a disaster. Her planned marriage with Isaiah—a sensitive young violinist who has come to believe that playing for the sake of playing, beauty for the sake of beauty, are truly idolatry—is inevitably shattered. In an epiphany of what may be blasphemy or may be true holiness, near the novel's close, Amalia experiences a vision of a God who torments His lovers, whose jealousy is catastrophic, whose love is a bedchamber of tears.

Can anyone succeed in becoming a new person? How are the ripples of trauma after the Holocaust to be healed? Does memorializing the dead enable the living to choose life, or does it entrap them? Does saturation in an ultra-Orthodox and mystical world save or warp the soul of the penitent? Is the giving of the self to God a fulfillment or an annihilation? What of the role of women within the many worlds of Jewishness in America and Israel? Can carnal and sacred love ever be one? These are

among the questions which *The Name* raises and leaves unanswered.

A coldly secular eye might say that Govrin's protagonist has fallen victim to a cult. Yet the sheer verbal beauty of Jewish liturgy, prophecy, and philosophy, the richness of symbolism in Amalia's weaving—interlaced with the motif of writing—and the depth of custom and legend shaping her life and this story, are irresistibly awesome. So is the aura of the city of Jerusalem, which becomes almost a living character in Govrin's tale. A host of minor characters running through the novel vividly recreates two simultaneous and nonoverlapping worlds—the one that remembers history and forgets God, and the one that clings to God and cannot confront the tragedy of history.

Govrin has been compared, as a novelist of the Holocaust, with David Grossman. Like Grossman, she evokes a society ripe with obsession and forgetting. Like other Israeli writers of fiction such as Savyon Liebrecht, she

deplores the way the dominant culture of Israel glosses over the pain of many of its citizens. But for the ecstatic music and mystery of her writing, her wrestling with memory that invokes centuries past, her ability to evoke hope and despair in a single breath, and above all the spirituality of her vision, I would set Govrin alongside Toni Morrison. As Morrison's most famous novel closes with the single word "Beloved," so Govrin's *The Name* closes with the single word "Sabbath." Is this Sabbath one of destruction or of healing? We do not know, although we have seen Amalia struggle toward acceptance of a flawed self, a flawed world, and a flawed God. Govrin implies that acknowledgment of painful realities past and present, rather than the attempt to suppress pain by repentance, is what may heal both an individual self and a society. Like Morrison's *Beloved*, this is a revolutionary novel that will haunt the reader. □

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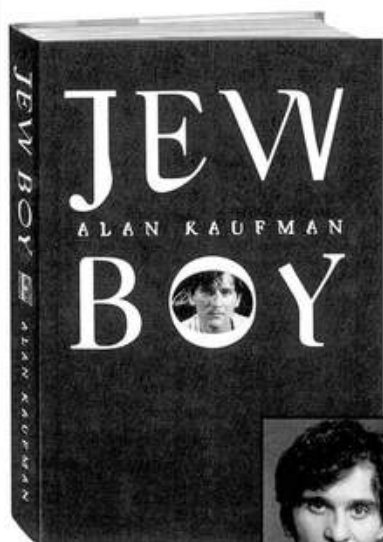


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Winter

Arthur J. Magida

Summer and spring are when we love to be outdoors, but winter might be when we need to be outdoors. It's then that we can really revel in the splendor that is above us all day long when the sun blots it out. It's also there all night long as we're swaddled in flannel pj's and tucked away under the warmest of goose down.

On a good winter night, even when there's the slightest glare from city lights, every star is as bright as a headlight. This is one of the undeniable advantages of winter: absolutely clear skies, no haze, scant pollution, minimal smog. The edge of every cloud is limned by silver moon rays, and even the vast blackness between stars and moon and clouds doesn't seem as coal-black as it does the rest of the year. If you look up now at night, what you see aren't necessarily heavenly bodies, but maybe heaven itself, with its endlessness and peacefulness that silence even the most loquacious of us for at least a few gracious moments. In the cold of the night, there's a warming of the soul, a softening of the heart, a clinging both to the earth below us and to the skies above us as we sense that maybe there really are no demarcations between them—and us—after all.

Praise God, sun and moon,

instructs Psalm 148,

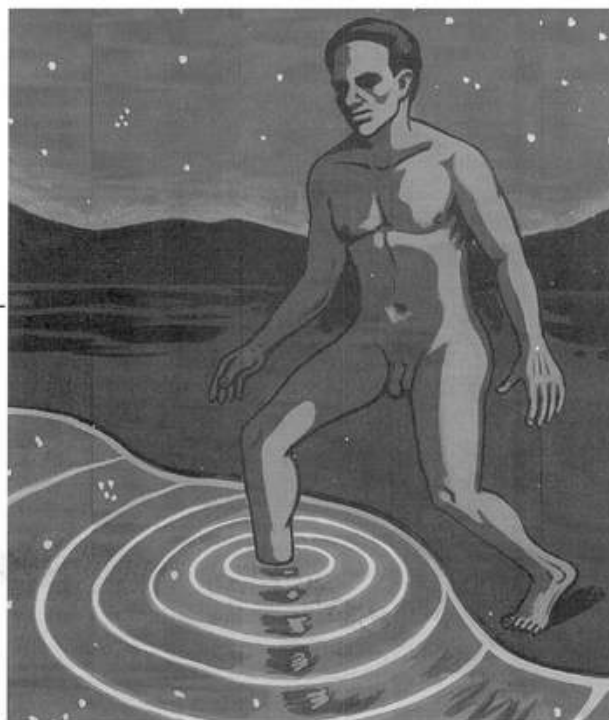
Praise God all you shining stars!

*Praise God, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens.*

And so we praise, even if it's just silently and without words and without resorting to Psalms, which certainly has the correct celebratory theme. We praise just by looking, just by appreciating, just by acknowledging that there is more above us than we usually have reason to believe there might be, that we can see splendor and majesty just by turning our eyes upward a few degrees more than we usually do, that there is a whole other universe in the universe.

It's all really quite simple—and all really quite awesome. If there was, indeed, a plan for the universe and for the sentient beings in it, it probably was the subtle one that all we have to do to know our place and our reason for being is to raise our eyes, to look around us, to know that we—and everything that exists—is far more than we might be led to believe.

Arthur J. Magida is the author of Prophet of Rage, and the forthcoming Land of the Poison Wind. He is a columnist for Beliefnet.com and is writing The Rabbi and The Hitman.



Doing all this doesn't take much effort. It does take remembering, but that doesn't consume any calories. Remembering to go outside, to look up, to know that there are broader dimensions than what we almost immunize ourselves against. Remembering, of course, as the weeks go by (and as it will get colder) to put on a jacket or a sweater and to go away from the glare and, once we are there, to not do much of anything except be there and elevate our eyesight. Except this time, to really look. Don't try to find anything specific in the sky: satellites or stars or constellations or planes flying overhead en route to Lord knows where. Whatever you need to see, you will see. Don't even try to make sense of what you see: long, stretched out, striated clouds; puffy, almost pneumatic clouds—all of them lit with light that is truly otherworldly, truly from above us (but quite possibly resonates with a light within us, as well).

And as you look, try to remember these words, which also come from Psalms:

*The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims the handiwork of the Divine.
Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declare knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words:
their voice is not heard;
yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words go to the end of the world.*

Words float to the end of the world; vision sees almost to the end of the universe. It's enough to make you shudder with pleasure, and certainly with respect. Respect that this is Creation; pleasure that we are a part of it. Or maybe when I do this, and it is really cold and the mercury has once again plunged into the teens or below, I might be shuddering for another, much more explainable and surely less personal reason: those shudders might be shivers—and I might be aching to dash inside for a steaming hot cup of cocoa. And that, too, is something to give thanks for. □

ILLUSTRATION BY JON STRAUS

*Tikkun (te-kün) ... to heal, repair and
transform the world.
All the rest is commentary*

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